

No. 52

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT AT SEAGIRT OR NEW FRIENDS AND OLD FOES



by MAURICE STEVENS

“There is your thief!” shouted Birkett, pointing at Jack and at the skates on his arm. “Do him up, fellows; this is your chance!”

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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JACK LIGHTFOOT AT SEAGIRT; OR, New Friends and Old Foes.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, who after proving himself to be the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, and a natural leader, had come to Seagrit to enter the academy there with the intention of fitting himself for college. Jack was a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports. Young America delights in—a boy who, in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved himself Jack's loyal friend through thick and thin. He could also do a few other things besides eat, as the reader may soon discover.

Professor Phineas Chubb, principal of Seagirt Academy, a fat, pompous man.

Professor Titus Lazenby, Chubb's assistant, and sometimes called Professor "Dry-as-Dust."

Sidney Percival, Kid Kennedy and Julian Glaze, students at the academy.

Kitty Percival, a pretty girl, Sidney Percival's sister, whose life Jack saved by a thrilling act of heroism.

Ben Birkett, a youth who had once been Jack's bitter enemy in Cranford.

Moses Mudd, a boy who drove a gray horse, and who became a great admirer of Jack.

CHAPTER I.

MOSES MUDD

It was at the opening of the school term in the first week in January that Jack Lightfoot arrived in Seagirt, coming there as a stranger from Cranford.

He got off at the lower station, not understanding that there was one nearer the Seagirt Academy, and was promptly hailed by a boyish voice:

"Take ye up, mister?"

The result of this invitation was that a minute or so later Jack was being whirled away in the direction of the school he was to attend in this lively town by the sea, and was also making the acquaintance of Moses Mudd, the boy who drove the shabby, gray horse that drew the pung in which Jack had found a seat.

Moses had a freckled face, and a wide mouth, and peering gray eyes that were full of merriment. With his mitten hands he held the reins and snapped the

whip over the gray. He sat at Jack's side and looked up curiously into his face.

"Goin' to be one o' the new scholars?" he asked.

"Yes," Jack answered.

Moses grinned.

"Well, they'll skin ye!"

"Who will?" Jack queried.

"T'other fellers. They allus do."

"That's pleasant. You mean the boys of the school."

"Yep."

Jack smiled.

"What will they do?"

"Jes' wait and see. Nobody never knows what they're goin' to do. It's allus somethin' new. When the school year begun in the fall they tarred and feathered a feller, and then set the feathers on fire. It was a dark night, and they set the feathers afire to git light to see how he looked."

Moses seemed to think this was funny, rather than dreadful. He laughed and squinted his gray eyes, and apparently wished that he had been a witness of that spectacle.

"You bet they're rough-house!" he added, with admiration. "Pap says't if he had to do with 'em he'd whale the waddin' out of 'em. Don't know any o' them fellers, do ye?"

"No, but I'd like to hear something about them."

"Well, there's Kid Kennedy an' Pepper Brown. An' Jim Bolt. He's a Canadian. Some o' the fellers calls him a Canuck. And there's 'Alfalfa' Leslie. And there's another feller—Miles Long; and he's tall as a bean pole, too. And then there's Sid Percival. That's his sister walking along over there. But Kid Kennedy is the worst o' the bunch."

He snapped his whip in the direction of a slender girl, almost a young lady, who was walking on the railroad track, some distance ahead, and seemed to be going into the town.

"She goes to the girls' school," he explained. "Kid Kennedy's stuck on her."

"So, there is a girls' school, is there?" Jack asked, looking at the trim figure of the girl.

"Yep. Right over there. You kin jes' see it through them trees. It's close down by the water. She's been to the lower skatin' pond, I guess, 'cause she's got her skates; and she's late now, an's got to hustle."

This reminded him that he ought to hustle, so he swung the whip again, and clucked loudly to the horse.

"Gad-up!" he cried. "You're slower'n cold molasses!"

"Is there another boys' school?" Jack inquired, his eyes fixed on the young miss who walked with such dainty strides along the railroad embankment.

"Yep; one more. It's away off there, behind that hill. Some times the Seagirt Academy boys and the fellers over there git into a fight, and when they do you bet there's somethin' doin'. But when I git big enough I'm goin' to the academy. You have to go through the high school, and then you go to the academy; and, after that, you can go to college, if you want to. Only, when you come from some high schools you don't have to stay as long in the academy before you can go to college as you do if you come from some other high schools. You're goin' to college?"

"I think so."

"Gee! That's the cheese! I'm goin' some day. Which one you goin' to?"

"I don't know yet."

"Will you have to stay long in this academy before you can go to college?"

"I don't know that yet, either. It depends on what place I can take in the classes. I can't know about that until after I've taken the examinations."

"Oh, they're corkers! Tom Johnson tried to take 'em, and he couldn't, and now he's back in the Seagirt high school. If you can't take 'em you'll have to go home. Ten fellers failed last fall, and had to go back home."

The pung, drawn by the old gray, swung along the road, where the snow was piled in deep, white drifts, Moses Mudd snapping at the horse with the whip, and at the same time talking a streak.

As they thus swung along they came nearer the girl who was walking on the embankment. She heard the tinkle of the bells on the horses, and turned round to look, giving Jack a good view of her face.

It was a clear-complexioned, strong face, with blue eyes looking down at him, and a strand or two of golden-brown hair blown in the wind, where it had escaped from under her heavy winter hat. Jack could not pass such beauty unobserved, and he stared so hard that he had almost a guilty sense of rudeness.

The boy waved his hand to her, and she waved back, giving the skates on her arm a swing as she did so. Then she stepped on the high trestle which at this point crossed a deep ravine that was choked with high white snow-drifts.

"Did you say that she has a brother at the academy?" Jack asked, still following her with his eyes.

"Yep. Sid Percival."

"And her name is—"

"Kitty Percival. But you won't like Sid, and I know it. Him and Kid Kennedy are chums, and Kid is a tough. He was the leader of the crowd that tarred and feathered that feller; only they couldn't never prove it on him. He was too smart fer 'em. It takes a good un to git ahead o' Kid Kennedy."

"Does Sid look anything like his sister?"

"Not so's you could notice it. Why, that feller is—"

Mudd hesitated, searching for a word that would express adequately his opinion of Sid Percival, and as he did so, a thing occurred which made both him and Jack Lightfoot forget the matter entirely.

"Gee!" said Mudd, slashing his horse. "That's an extry, and she didn't know it was comin'!"

CHAPTER II.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S HEROISM.

On the high trestle, the girl had become suddenly aware, through the roar of an approaching train, that her position was one of peril. She was but a third of the way across; and there she stopped, in hesitation, not knowing whether to hurry on and try to cross, or to run back for safety.

Moses Mudd slashed the old gray horse into a lurching gallop that took the pung rapidly toward the railroad crossing.

The train was approaching Seagirt, and, if the girl turned back to retrace her way, she would be going toward it. It was that fact which made her hesitate, and turn finally toward the other end of the trestle, even though that end was much farther away.

The fear that she could not reach that end in time made her stop again. She turned about in uncertainty, and looked down into the ravine, running nervously to and fro, as if seeking a safe place to leap down.

It was clear to Jack Lightfoot that Sid Percival's sister had lost her presence of mind, in the face of the sudden peril that confronted her.

As the pung neared the crossing, Jack leaped out, and ran out upon the railroad.

"This way!" he called, as he hurried toward her.

He felt that if she would run sharply in his direction, she could reach the end of the trestle before the train arrived, and would be safe.

Apparently she failed to comprehend his meaning.

Instead of running toward him, she started again toward the farther end. Then, after a half-dozen quick, nervous steps, she stopped again, and looked down into the ravine.

"This way!" he shouted, elevating his voice, and now running at top speed along the embankment to the trestle. "This way—quick!"

The roar of the train was increasing.

He could not see the train, for a deep cut and a high bank shut it off from sight; but he heard it so plainly that a little tremor ran through his nerves.

The sharp whistle of the engine cut through the frosty air, announcing the approach to the crossing and the trestle, and the girl again, though hesitating still, started to run on toward the farther end.

Jack was clear-headed enough to see that if he went upon the trestle his danger might quickly become greater than hers. By brisk running she could gain the farther end more speedily than he could, and there her safety now lay. If she had gone straight on, as it seemed for a moment she meant to do, he would have leaped for safety down the embankment.

But the hesitating manner of the girl made him fear that she would stop again, and that she had lost her head. This was true. Kitty Percival had become so bewildered and frightened that, at the moment, she hardly knew what she was doing.

Jack saw this now, and with that whistle screaming in the cut behind him, he sprang on the trestle, and ran at top speed along the track toward the girl, who was still hesitating, and now fairly reeling from fright.

"Toward the other end!" he yelled. "Run toward the other end!"

The roar of the train in the cut rose thunderously.

"Toward the other end!" he screamed, waving his hands.

She misunderstood him; and, instead of running toward the other end, she began to run toward him.

When Moses Mudd saw that his freckled face became the color of tallow. He had reined in the old gray, and stood up in the pung, with the lines in his hand, while his wide mouth had dropped open.

"They'll both be killed!" he gurgled.

The train shot out of the curve at full speed, the driving-wheels spinning round like tops. This train was a fast express, though an extra, and was following the express that had passed over the trestle but a few minutes before—that first express being the one which had brought Jack Lightfoot to Seagirt. Having the right of way, and feeling sure there was no obstruction on the track, the engineer had pulled open the

throttle, to gain headway for the trestle grade, and the train was simply flying.

Not until the engine was at the crossing where Moses Mudd stood, white-faced, in the pung, could the engineer look along the trestle. What he saw then, and what the fireman saw, also, brought a shrill shriek from the whistle of the locomotive, and caused the engineer to apply the air brakes and shut off steam. But it was too late. The momentum of the powerful engine and heavy train was enough of itself to hurl it upon and over the trestle.

Seeing that the girl had misunderstood him, or that in her fright she did not know what she was doing, Jack Lightfoot ran at a speed now which would have done credit to Wilson Crane on the cinder track, and Wilson was the fastest runner in the town of Cranford. Jack knew that his own life and the life of the girl depended on his speed, and he ran as perhaps he had never run in his life.

Even as he did so, his quick mind was taking in the whole situation and figuring the chances.

"This way!" he panted. "This way!"

The girl was running toward him. The color had gone out of her cheeks, and her blue eyes were wide open in fright. She still swung the skates on her arm, and the strands of her hair, blown loose in the wind, floated out like strands of brown gold, catching the bright sunlight.

That second scream of the whistle, as the engineer set the brakes, had thrilled through Jack like an electric shock, for the train seemed right behind him; and then, in another moment, he heard the shaking of the trestle, as the engine plunged out upon it, and the squeal and grind of the brakes.

In spite of the brakes, the train came on with a ponderous jar and a speed that was frightful.

Standing in his pung, Moses Mudd screamed out in fright, for it seemed to him that the engine would crush the life out of both Jack Lightfoot and the girl.

Then he beheld something that even increased his fright.

He saw Jack Lightfoot leap at the girl, drag her along, catch her in his arms, and, with a wild spring, throw himself and her clear of the rails and off the trestle.

The engine seemed almost to strike them, as it passed with a whizzing roar over the spot where they had been. And then the boy saw Jack and the girl drop down together through the air as if falling to their death.

Moses Mudd did not remain in the pung. He tum-

bled out over the side, and ran with clumping boots toward the frozen stream at the bottom of the ravine beneath the high trestle.

"Killed!" he groaned. "They're both killed."

He could not conceive of any one making that mad jump and being still alive.

The train whizzed and creaked on across the trestle, coming slowly to a stop, with the engine on the other side.

But, though it had seemed a mad leap to Moses, and to the engineer and fireman of the train, and would have seemed so to any who witnessed it, Jack Lightfoot had seen that it was the only thing that offered hope. Better to leap from the track, he knew, than to have the engine hurl them from it.

Yet it had not been a leap made without calculation. He had caught the white-faced and tottering girl by the arm and pulled her on for a half-dozen yards, that he might be at a point selected by his eye as he ran, doing this though it seemed to increase their danger by bringing the engine that much nearer them; and then, with the girl in his arms, he had jumped far out into the air, shooting downward with her.

But it was not to death, nor even to land on the stony ice, which fate Moses Mudd had thought the only thing possible; but to dash, at the end of the swift fall, into a great, smothering snow-bank, which the wind had heaped up at that point.

Jack aimed for that snow-bank in his leap, and he struck in the center of it.

Boy and girl went down out of sight in that white smother, with the snow closing over them; so that when Moses Mudd rounded the shoulder of the embankment and was able to look across the ravine he saw nothing but the ice and the snow.

Nevertheless, Moses did not stop the motion of his feet, but ran straight on; and in another moment or two, about the time he reached the edge of the ice, he saw two figures floundering in the snow of the huge drift.

They were Jack Lightfoot and the girl, struggling to extricate themselves.

Then Moses tore the cap from his head, and, swinging it round in wild delirium, yelled his surprise and joy.

"Whoop!" he squalled, plunging across the ice and through the snow toward them. "Whoop!"

The train had been brought to a standstill; and the fireman, having leaped to the ground, came running along the trestle, with some of the trainmen and pas-

sengers; and they, too, beheld Jack Lightfoot and the girl crawling out of the snow-bank.

The fireman and those with him came stumbling and tumbling down the steep bank into the ravine; but before either they or Moses gained Jack's side he had extricated himself and the girl.

They were covered with snow. Kitty Percival had lost her skates in the fall, and she was strangling and choking in a hysterical manner, while Jack was trying to assure her that she was now all right, and at the same time was flicking the snow from her clothing as well as she could. The wet snow stood in tear-drops on her cheeks, into which the color had begun to come, and it shook in showers from her clothing and her hair. She leaned unsteadily against Jack, as he spoke to her and tried to get the snow out of her clothing.

"You're all right, I think," he declared over and over again. "I'm awfully sorry this happened. But we had to jump, you know, or the engine would have knocked us both from the track."

The girl sobbed.

Moses Mudd came up, shouting and swinging his hat; and the fireman and his companions appeared.

"Anybody hurt?" the fireman asked anxiously.

A great crowd of passengers began to fringe the trestle above.

"I think not," said Jack, trying to speak cheerily, though he knew that his nerves were pretty well shaken. "I'm all right, and I think the young lady is."

The fireman began to assist him in putting Miss Kitty Percival to rights.

"That was the nerviest thing I ever seen," he said. "But it's a wonder you wasn't both killed. That's a big jump, and if you hadn't hit the snow-bank plum center it would have been all day with you. Must have jarred you some, anyhow."

"It was the only thing we could do," said Jack. "If we hadn't jumped, your engine would have knocked us off the track."

"I guess that's right, too," the fireman admitted nervously. "But what was you doin' there on the trestle? That trestle ain't made to walk on."

Jack did not answer this; but Moses Mudd did, with some acerbity of temper.

"By jacks, he run out there to keep Kitty Percival from bein' hit by the train. He was with me, in the pung, when he seen her up there, and seen that she was scairt."

"I—I was—awfully scared," the girl admitted, trembling. "I—I think I— Well, I became so fright-

ened I didn't know what to do, or what I was doing. I would have jumped, myself, but the ice down there frightened me."

"Good thing you didn't jump, and land on that ice," said the fireman. "But you oughtn't to have tried to cross the trestle."

"I thought the train had gone," she urged.

"She didn't know there was an extry," Moses put in. "Ner we didn't. The reg'lar was gone, and anybody had a right to expect that the trestle would be free for awhile."

"But it's not a public highway," urged the fireman, thinking of what would be said against the company and against himself and his engineer, "and no one has a right, at any time, to use it for a place to walk on. We were coming fifty miles an hour through that cut—"

"And violating the law in doing it, I'll be bound!" said one of the passengers. "That's a particularly dangerous crossing, and no train has a right to come through that cut, in its approach to that crossing and this trestle, at any such speed."

"It's done every day," argued the fireman.

"That doesn't make it right; and some day somebody will be killed here."

Kitty Percival had freed her clothing and herself of all the snow she could, and had in a measure regained her breath and her wits. She was still trembling, and showed a marked tendency to tears and a choking voice when she talked.

"I've got my pung over there," said Moses Mudd, pointing to the road, where the pung and the old gray horse were visible, "and I'll take ye on into town, if ye want to go. You can go on to school in 'er, if you'd like to."

The girl seemed still dazed; and then Jack asked her if she did not want to go in the pung.

"I'll come back this afternoon and dig them skates out fer you," said Moses, as if he thought her hesitation, or indecision, was due to the fact that her skates had disappeared in the snow-bank.

"Oh, let the old skates go!" she said nervously. "I think I'd better try to go home, instead of on to school."

"Jes', as you say," said Moses. "There's the pung."

Jack conducted her toward the pung, with the boy running on before, and some of the passengers walking at her side, even though the fireman was climbing back up the embankment, and the train could be expected to proceed in a few moments.

CHAPTER III.

IN SEAGIRT.

Jack Lightfoot accompanied the nervous and shivering girl to her home, which he found to be a large house on the outskirts of the town, and where, if he had chosen to tarry, he would have been lionized by Kitty's mother.

Jack escaped, and went back to the pung, where Moses Mudd was awaiting him.

Moses had suddenly become a hero-worshiper, and Jack Lightfoot was his hero.

"Gee!" he said, as he had said a dozen times to himself already, "I wouldn't done that fer a thousand dollars! What if that ingine had hit ye?"

"It would have been all up with me, I guess!" was Jack's answer, as he stowed himself in beside the boy and tucked the hairy lap-robe about them both.

"Now, I'm goin' to take you on to the academy. You're awfully late, if you expected to git into any of the classes to-day; but I guess you won't need classes until you've been put through some o' them examinations."

He lashed the old gray again, and the pung slid away over the snow, the bells tinkling merrily.

Moses could talk of nothing but that exploit on the trestle, and some of his comments were enough to make Jack smile.

When they arrived in front of the cluster of brick buildings, which he said was the Seagirt Academy, and stopped the pung there before a tall iron gate set in a high wall, that gave to the front entrance the appearance of a prison, he remarked amiably:

"I was goin' to charge you a quarter fer bringin' you up here, but now I don't charge nothin'."

Jack laughed, and took out a silver half-dollar.

"I can't let you bring me without pay."

At any other time Moses Mudd's gray eyes would have glittered with anticipation. But now his freckled face flushed.

"Not any!" he said. "I don't take nothin'—see? And, whenever you want to ride with me, jes' climb in an' they won't be any charges. Chee! I wouldn't gone on that trustle fer a thousand dollars!"

From this he could not be moved.

He did not turn away until he had seen Jack pass through the high iron gate; and then he drove off, whistling, toward the town.

Jack Lightfoot stood before the big brick buildings, looking about with something like nervous trepidation. He was a stranger, in a strange land. Of all the young fellows in those buildings he knew not one. The

things he had done in Cranford, and his reputation there, these were all as nothing here.

There were times when Jack was given to a bit of timidity, or moral cowardice, and one of those times came to him now. He almost wished that it did not seem necessary to advance farther than this gate, as he stood there looking about; and he sincerely wished himself back in Cranford, by beautiful Cranford Lake, in the company of the boys and girls whom he knew so well.

He had left Cranford with a queer feeling of sorrow and trepidation. When he first contemplated going to Seagirt he had thought of it with pleasure. It meant new scenes and experiences, and new scenes and experiences are pleasant, in anticipation.

But when the time came for him to go, when he had to kiss his mother and sister good-by, and when a troop of young people, all of them his friends, came down to the station to see him off, and he stood there with them clustering about him, listening to their rattling comment, catching now and then a half-hidden tear from some one whom he particularly liked, what it meant to leave dear old Cranford came over him in a manner that choked his throat and blurred his eyes.

Then when the train pulled out of the station, and he looked from the car window at those faces, heard the cheers, and saw the waving hands and fluttering handkerchiefs, he had to choke back the tears that it seemed would overflow on his cheeks in spite of his best efforts to repress them.

And so he had come to Seagirt, leaving the old life behind him. That old life had never seemed so dear; nor did he ever expect to find friends as true as those he had left.

After standing for a time in hesitation just inside the gate, Jack pulled his courage together a bit, and, observing a man sweeping snow from one of the paths, he went up to him, and asked to be directed to Professor Chubb's room.

He had a letter in his pocket from Professor Chubb, sent to him in answer to his inquiries about the school.

"This way," said the man, beckoning; and he led Jack to a side entrance of one of the larger buildings.

Professor Chubb was the principal, or head master, of Seagirt Academy.

There was a young man in the small room into which Jack was shown; and when Jack had asked to see the professor, and had shown the letter, he was informed by this young man that Professor Chubb had been called out of town that morning, and would not return until the next day.

"I think your best plan would be to go to some hotel or boarding-house, and see him in the morning," said this young person, handing back the letter.

So Jack, like the ten thousand men who marched up the hill and then marched down again, departed from the little room, and from the big brick buildings that seemed so overpowering; and he was glad to get away.

As he walked on down the street, he beheld a train pulling out in the direction of Cranford, and wished that he was aboard of it and going back.

"I might, at the high school there, get along well enough to pass the entrance examinations at college," was his thought; "and it would be so much pleasanter there than here where I don't know any one."

Yet the Cranford high school, while a good school, did not profess to fit its patrons for college, and the Cranford Academy, which did make that profession, had so lost standing and prestige since the disgrace and misfortune of Professor Sanderson, its principal, that Jack himself, as well as his parents, had decided that he ought to go to Seagirt. He was well advanced in his studies in the high school; and if the reputation borne by Seagirt were true it was just the place for him.

Having found a hotel which was not too far away from the school, Jack secured a room, and then set out to see the town. He found it a pretty place, larger than Cranford, with buildings and residences of a more pretentious kind, and with an air of thrift and business that was pleasing. Trolley cars threaded its principal streets; and along its wharves and on its streets there was to be seen a good deal of life and activity.

Jack went down to the wharves, and watched with interest the vessels that were there.

When he returned toward the hotel, he stopped on his way at the post-office. He hardly expected a letter when he inquired at the general-delivery window, but merely meant to instruct the clerk there to have his mail sent for that day to the hotel.

To his surprise he was given a letter.

It was from Lafe Lampton, as the handwriting showed, and Jack could have shouted when he received it, for it was like a breath of fresh air from Cranford Lake.

He tore it open, and then read:

"DEAR JACK: They can't tie me here since you've gone. Look for me to-morrow. I'm going to pass those Seagirt examinations, or bust a button trying. I think some of the other fellows will come after a little. The old town is dead without you. So, you bet, I'm coming. As ever, your friend,

LAFE."

Jack could have yelled his delight.

"Lafe!" he said, his face flushing with pleasure; and then he read that little note again, for it seemed too good to be true.

"It won't be so bad here, if Lafe comes, and, perhaps, some of the other fellows. I know Tom was talking of it, but I didn't think he would. And I certainly didn't expect Lafe."

Jack walked out of the post-office with a light heart.

"Lafe!" he said again joyously, as he reached the street.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER FIRE.

That afternoon Jack was given another surprise, which in its way was very pleasant. He was called on at the hotel by the father of Kitty Percival, who thanked him for his heroism. It was a thing which, Mr. Percival said, he could never forget; and at the same time he assured Jack that he would always find a welcome at the Percival home. Mr. Percival ended this by an invitation to Jack to take dinner there that evening.

The moral cowardice which had made Jack want to go back to Cranford would have made him decline this invitation, if he had not seen how ungracious such a refusal would be.

It cannot be denied, though, that his moral courage was given something of a brace by the thought that he would again get to see the girl he had rescued on the trestle. He had ridden with her in the pung, it is true, but she had then been in no condition for conversation, and Jack really had not discovered what sort of girl she was. He only knew that she was a beautiful creature, whose blue eyes were enough to set the head of any fellow to whirling and his heart to dancing.

So Jack accepted Mr. Percival's invitation to dinner; and went so early that he had half-an-hour or more in the sitting-room with Kitty Percival and her mother before dinner time, finding Kitty as pleasant a girl as he thought he had ever met.

Mr. Percival came in from his office, and Sidney Percival from the lake where he had been skating, while Jack sat there talking with Kitty and her mother.

Jack had not forgotten what Moses Mudd had told him of Sid Percival; and he looked curiously at the young fellow who was shown into the room and introduced to him.

He knew at a glance that Mudd was right in saying that Sid was a different sort from his sister. Sid was a good-looking young fellow, so far as looks went;

but he had a certain air and swing of recklessness and conceit that was not wholly pleasing. In a word, Sid seemed to be "stuck on himself."

Nevertheless, he greeted Jack pleasantly, and expressed his gratitude over what Jack had done; modifying his praise, however, a moment later, by remarking that, "if Kit had not been a fool she wouldn't have gone on that trestle!"

Kitty Percival flushed hotly.

"Yes, I was foolish in doing that," she admitted.

When Jack departed that evening from the Percival home, he was thinking altogether too much of a pair of bright, blue eyes, of the sound of a rich, sweet voice raised in singing while the girl's white fingers slipped over the keys of the piano, and very little of the people of Cranford.

Nevertheless, he took out Lafe's letter before he went to bed, and read it again with pleasure.

"Perhaps I can make friends here," was his thought, as he retired for the night. "And Lafe will be here to-morrow. How I wish a lot of the other Cranford fellows would come!"

In the morning, before setting out for the academy, Jack was given a start of surprise. The Seagirt *Sentinel*, a local morning paper, had been brought into the hotel office, and there Jack saw his name in bold type on the first page, together with an account of his heroism of the day before. No reporter had called on him, but the facts had been gleaned from some source, and the story was spread out in leaded type.

Jack had been about to leave the hotel; but he sat down now and read the paper through, reading the report of what he had done several times.

His first thought, when his surprise had passed, was that it might be a good thing to have this in the paper; it would tell people who he was, and something about him, and would show, at least to the academy boys, that, though a stranger, he was no coward.

Jack had a good deal of human nature in his make-up, and he cannot be blamed for the little glow of pride that came to him when he saw his exploit set out in the Seagirt paper in that attractive manner. Every one loves praise; and there Jack was praised as a hero who had performed a brave deed.

The clerk of the hotel, who had noticed the headings, and had already heard the story, stood regarding Jack, as the latter read the news report.

"Mighty clever thing that!" he said cordially. "I've heard a good many talking about it. They say the girl would have been killed if you hadn't acted as prompt as you did. I think old Percival ought to pay

you something handsome for that, and I've heard others say the same."

Jack rebelled at the thought.

"The idea!" he cried. "Why, if he should offer me anything, I wouldn't take it. Any fellow would have done what I did."

"I don't know about that," the clerk averred. "I don't think I would. Why, you might have been killed yourself; and I'm told you did come mighty near it!"

"Any fellow would have done that," Jack insisted.

Yet his feeling of self-satisfaction was increased, and the natural love of praise which every one feels, and which Jack had in good measure, had been pleasantly gratified.

He began to think that this happening would perhaps smooth the way for him on his entrance into Seagirt Academy, and he began to feel that it was almost providential. He had already found friends, and that would help him to make more, and to make them at once. He even fancied he could see the principal of the school telling him what a brave thing he had done, and of Sid Percival introducing him round among the fellows as the new student who had saved his sister.

A number of young fellows were in the academy grounds this time, as Jack passed through the high gate.

They took notice of him at once, which seemed a good indication. One or two came his way.

Then his air-blown bubble of sudden pride received a most painful and severe pricking.

Some of the fellows began to whistle: "See the Conquering Hero Comes!"

And then these words reached him, in a high whisper, which it was plain he was expected to hear:

"Yes, that's the Wonder!"

"Do you suppose we'd dare to go up to him?" said one.

"Well, if you should crawl on your knees, you might."

"They say his name is Lightfoot. I suppose that means that he's a sprinter?"

"Oh, he's everything—he's a Wonder!"

Jack's face had colored like fire, but he walked on toward the room into which he had been shown the day before.

Professor Chubb had not arrived, however, and no one was there to open the door, for Jack was early. Jack stood staring at the door. A hot flash of anger had passed through him, and he knew that his cheeks were aflame. These young fellows were inclined to make sport of him! Perhaps it served him right, for

the attention given to him by the newspaper and by the Percivals might have turned his head a bit, if the fellows of the school had but continued that flattering process. They didn't intend to continue it.

Jack stood in front of the door, looking over the yard, long enough to get control of himself. He could have remained in front of the door until Professor Chubb appeared, but that smacked of cowardice. So he turned about and strolled back along the path by which he had come; his face flushing again in spite of his efforts to control his feelings, when he came in sight of the young fellows who had been whispering and staring before and found them whispering and staring again.

Jack tried to coax a pleasant smile to his face, as he walked toward one of them.

"You've got pleasant grounds here," he remarked, thinking thus to strike up a conversation, and so "break the ice."

The fellow addressed retreated before him in a surprised way.

All the other fellows gurgled with surprise.

"Why, he can really talk!" one of them declared, as if the thing astonished him.

Another turned and drawled lazily to the youth nearest him:

"Say, Glaze, look up some authorities, will you, and find out if heroes talk in ordinary language."

"They don't," said the young fellow called Glaze. "They always speak in dead tongues."

"I thought so!" He stared hard at Jack. "Then this fellow must be an impostor."

They were retreating before Jack, as if his approach spelled contamination.

Jack's face grew hot and his gray-blue eyes flashed. Yet he still tried hard to crowd down his temper.

"That's all right," he declared, endeavoring to smile and speak pleasantly. "I suppose you fellows think this is fun, and I oughtn't to object to it."

"Look out, fellows!" one warned. "He's bunching his biceps! He'll hand you a fiver, first thing you know."

Jack laughed rather harshly.

"I didn't come here to fight."

"Oh, he didn't come here to fight!"

"But he can fight!"

"Sure thing! Look at that arm, and those shoulders. If he should hit you you'd be a mere blood-spot on the snow."

"Yes," said another; "isn't he great? He must be a fighter."

"See that neck—looks like a bull's neck!"

"And those calves—I wonder where the cow is?"

"Say, he ought to wear knickerbockers all the time, just to exhibit those calves!"

"Is this funny to you?" said Jack. "If it is, go ahead."

"Oh, he's speaking again! Did you see his jaw move?"

"Say," called the fellow addressed as Glaze, "did they play football where you came from?"

"Well, rather."

"And I suppose you were the leader and captain of the eleven?"

"I was," Jack answered.

"Ah-h-h!"

"He was captain of the eleven!" whispered a half-dozen, opening their mouths in simulated surprise.

"And you played baseball?" said Glaze.

Jack had stopped in his advance toward these fellows who retreated whenever he approached them.

"Of course," Jack answered. "They play baseball everywhere, I think."

"And you were captain of the nine?"

"I was."

"Ah-h-h! He was also captain of the nine!" the fellows chorused in loud whispers.

"You played ice hockey, too, I suppose?" said Glaze.

"Certainly."

Jack knew what was coming next; and it came:

"And you were captain, also, of the hockey team?"

"I was," Jack answered, with a nervous laugh, for even to him the thing began to seem funny.

"Ah-h-h! He was also captain of the hockey team. He is a Wonder!"

"Ah-h-h! A Wonder and a Hero!" they chorused.

"And he has condescended to come here!"

"Ah-h-h! Just think of it!"

"Get on your knees, fellows, before him; lick the dust—the snow, I mean—before his feet."

"But they're such big feet!" some one protested.

"Ah-h-h, yes; such big feet! But that's because he's a Wonder."

"Yes, a Wonder and a Hero!"

Jack had thrust his hands down into the pockets of his coat, and was looking about, trying to remain calm, and, also, trying to smile.

"Go on, fellows," he urged, resolved to maintain his good humor.

Then, from somewhere, there came a whistling snowball, that struck him on the head and knocked off his cap. As if this were a signal, snowballs filled the

air, all aimed at him. They struck him like a hail-storm. Face, breast, shoulders, back, and legs, were hit time and again. The fellows who had been guying him jumped into the attack.

Jack's anger flamed up; and, stooping, he tried to mold a snowball and hurl it at the fellow nearest him.

But as suddenly as the snowballs had come, they stopped, and Jack heard a scampering of feet; and heard, also, the whispered name—"Chubb!"

The tormenters of Jack Lightfoot fled; and through the iron gateway appeared a round, fat man, who walked heavily and with a cane, and wore a big, long overcoat. It was Professor Chubb.

CHAPTER V.

FURTHER EXPERIENCES.

Jack Lightfoot felt a sense of confusion and humiliation as he rose, snow-covered, from his stooping position, and beheld that round figure come through the gate and along the path that led to the principal's room. Some of the snowballs had been thrown with stinging force; and to be assaulted in that way by a shower of snowballs is never conducive to good temper.

Jack brushed the snow as carefully as he could from his clothing, and after Chubb had disappeared in the direction of the side door he followed.

The young man whom Jack had seen before answered Jack's knock, and seemed to frown when he beheld before him the youth whom he had spoken to the previous morning.

"Mr. Chubb is busy with his mail, sir," said this young personage; "but he will see you soon, if you'll step this way."

Jack was aware that Professor Chubb gave him a glance as he passed the door and took a seat in a sort of anteroom.

Here he was left for many minutes, cooling his temper, and himself as well, while Chubb and the young personage kept well out of sight.

"They don't seem anxious to welcome any one to this place," was Jack's thought; and again he had a feeling that it would have been better if he had stayed in Cranford. His heart burned unpleasantly against the young fellows who had met his advances so insolently, and he resolved to be even with them at the first opportunity. Then he reflected that it was not at all certain yet that he would be permitted to become a student here. He had not met Professor Chubb, nor had he passed those entrance examinations.

The wait in the anteroom had become wearisome

before the young man came out and beckoned to Jack to follow him.

In one way the delay had been a good thing. Jack was not now a moving snow image. But the snow, melting, had made his clothing and hair damp and uncomfortable.

Professor Chubb sat behind a big desk; and, as if this were not barrier enough, he had perched on his prominent Roman nose a pair of huge eye-glasses, through which he stared at Jack as the latter came into the room.

"This is Mr. Lightfoot," said the obsequious young man, stopping in front of the professor.

Then he moved out of the way and gave Jack a chance; and the latter, moving nearer, proceeded to introduce himself as well as he could, and produced the letter which he had received in Cranford from the professor, and also his certificate of standing at the Cranford high school.

Chubb looked at the letter as if he had never seen it before, and after possessing himself of its contents, informed Jack that he might take a seat.

The bowing young person retreated and closed the door behind him.

Chubb fitted the eye-glasses again to his prominent nose, and glanced over the Cranford school statement of Jack's scholarship.

"Ah!" he said, looking over his eye-glasses at Jack. "I observe that you have read Cæsar, and know something of Greek, and Physics! Have you done anything in Virgil, or Zenophon?"

"A little," Jack answered, feeling the professor's eyes boring him through."

"You will be given a test in them, then. And you will, also, be required to translate from Cæsar certain selections; and also a little from the Greek, and to demonstrate just how much you know of Physics and Geometry."

Jack did not answer this, for it did not seem to call for an answer.

The professor looked at his watch, and let the eye-glasses slide from his nose.

"I have been away, and am very busy this morning. I observe that your conduct and application are marked as good, and that is as it should be. I shall have my assistant examine you in a few minutes."

He toyed with the eye-glasses, that were suspended by a slender, black cord.

"Ah—I think," he began, clearing his throat softly, "that you were engaged in some rough snowballing, as I came into the academy grounds awhile ago."

"I was merely trying to defend myself," Jack protested.

"Do you know who the boys were who attacked you?" was the next question.

"No, sir."

Chubb fingered his eye-glasses.

"If you knew, would you tell?"

Jack hesitated.

"I should rather not answer that," he said, after a moment.

Chubb looked sharply at him.

"Very well, Mr. Lightfoot."

He arose and opened a door at the side of the room.

"This way," he said; and Jack followed him into another room, where he was given into the hands of the assistant, a lean, dry man, with cold eyes, who immediately began to apply the thumbscrews of an inquisitorial examination.

Jack did not know how he stood, when he came out of that room, but he feared the worst. There was something in the manner of the assistant that drove Jack's memory away, and made him at times unable to answer questions concerning things that he was sure he knew.

He had, however, as he was about to leave the inquisition behind him, been asked if he preferred, in case he passed his examinations successfully, to lodge in one of the dormitories, or out in town.

"In a dormitory," Jack answered.

It was late that afternoon before Jack knew whether he was to go or stay; but when he called again at Chubb's office, to learn his fate, he found the professor in a smiling humor; and was promptly assigned a room in a dormitory on the school grounds.

Jack felt easier now, and in a sense jubilant.

Hardly had his trunk been brought up and installed in the room when he had a caller, who tapped lightly on the door, and came in when Jack rose and opened it.

The caller was Sid Percival.

Sid slid softly through the door and dropped into a chair near it. His manner was sly and cautious, as if he feared he might be seen by some one who ought not to see him.

Jack was glad to meet him again, remembering how kindly Sid had been at his home the evening before. And he was Kitty Percival's brother! Jack could not forget that.

"Glad you got through," said Sid, softly, as if walls have ears.

He had closed the door.

"I thought for a time I might fail," Jack admitted, with a smile.

"I saw what happened out by the gate this morning," said Sid. "It was a shame!"

"I thought it was a bit uncalled for," said Jack.

"Oh, it was an outrage! But you mustn't pay any attention to such things. There are a lot of smart Alecks here who think they've got to take down any new fellow that comes."

Sid talked on in this way for some time, assuring Jack that he was his friend, and ended by asking Jack for a "donation," for the purpose of helping to defray the expenses of a certain theatrical entertainment, that was soon to be given by the students.

"Anything you've a mind to contribute, you know," he urged amiably. "Ten dollars will do!"

Ten dollars seemed an enormous sum for such a purpose, and Jack was about to refuse; and then thought that he would not be "mean" about the very first contribution asked of him.

So he took ten dollars from his pocketbook and handed it to Sid.

In less than twenty minutes another fellow was in the room, asking for five dollars for a fund that was being raised to put new apparatus in the gymnasium.

"I thought the academy supported its own gymnasium," Jack observed.

"Not Seagirt!" was the answer. "They're meaner than sin here, in things like that."

Jack hesitated longer this time; but finally turned over two dollars.

Ten minutes later another young fellow was wanting five dollars, with which to help buy new hockey sticks and uniforms for the hockey team.

Jack had begun to "tug."

"Not any more to-day," he said positively. "I've already forked over twelve dollars, and that is enough for the first afternoon."

In another ten minutes the fellow whom Jack had heard addressed as Glaze came stealing into the room.

"I'm Julian Glaze," he said, "and you've got the room I had last week. I was turned out of it, and given a room on the other side of the hall. But I was put to a good deal of expense here; and if you're honest you'll cough up for it, seeing that you're to use the things I paid for."

The room had been absolutely bare, when Jack moved into it, and Jack had been making an inventory of the articles he would need to purchase to fit it up properly.

"Certainly, that would be right, if any of your

things were here," he acknowledged; "but there were none of your things in here when I took the room."

"Why, they're in here now!" Glaze declared.

Jack glanced round the room. This was a new line of attack. When Glaze appeared, he had thought the fellow meant to ask for money for some other team, or club, or exhibition.

Glaze pointed brazenly at the wall.

"There!" he said. "That wall-paper! I had that put on, and it cost me ten dollars."

Jack flushed.

"I don't think I shall pay for that."

The wall-paper was old; and Jack knew at once that Glaze was trying to "work" him.

"Why not?" demanded Glaze, with a frown.

"I don't think you put that on."

"Do you mean to tell me I'm a liar?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then what do you mean?"

"That I don't intend to pay you for the wall-paper."

"Well, what about the floor?"

"Do you want pay for the floor?"

"I want pay for the paint on the floor, and for the cost of putting it on!"

The paint was so worn, that the wood showed through in spots, and Jack had been figuring on a carpet or rug for the floor, among his other estimates.

"I suppose I'm pretty green," he acknowledged; "but I'm not green enough to do that."

He began to see now that in paying out the twelve dollars he had been "worked" for that sum.

"You won't pay it?" said Glaze fiercely.

"Certainly not."

"You'll have to pay it."

"See here," said Jack. "I'm willing to pay for all that I buy or use that belongs to another, but I'm dead sure I ought not to pay for the paint and the wall-paper in this room."

Glaze rose, apparently in a rage.

"You'll be made to pay it!" he threatened.

Jack was angry; nevertheless, he laughed.

"Glaze," he said, "when you can convince me that I ought to pay for those things, I'm ready to pay for them. Good day."

"You mean to turn me out of the room?"

"Oh, no; stay as long as you want to."

He leaned back in his chair and looked at Glaze, and the light in his gray-blue eyes was not exactly pleasant. Glaze had his hand on the door-knob, as if about to take his departure.

"By the way," said Jack, "weren't you one of the

fellows who attacked me with snowballs this morning, after going through that other business that I suppose you thought was funny?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh, well, if you don't know what I'm talking about, let it go. But I heard your name called down there, and thought I saw you."

"You won't pay for the wall-paper and the paint?"

"Certainly not."

"All right; I'll see that you do!"

Then Glaze was gone.

"What next?" thought Jack.

But no one else came in that afternoon; and, after awhile, Jack left his room in the dormitory and walked down to the post-office, to tell the clerk there that his mail was to be sent to the academy, and also in the hope of a letter.

There was one, and it was from Lafe.

Jack tore it open eagerly.

"Dear Jack," it read, "I can't get off to-day. So many things to do, you know. But I'll be with you to-morrow. I've been talking with some of the other fellows. Yours, LAFE."

"Worth a hundred such fellows as I've met here!" was Jack's thought.

And he read the letter again, for the mere perusal of it gave him pleasure.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INSULT.

That night as Jack was thinking of going to bed, there came again a soft tap on the door of his room.

Once more it was Sid Percival who entered.

Jack had been thinking of Sid and those other fellows who, he was now almost sure, had "worked him" for money. Nevertheless, he greeted Sid with a smile, resolved not to break with him.

"A lot of the fellows are having a spread," said Sid, sliding softly into the chair he had before occupied near the door, "and I thought maybe you'd like to attend it."

In vain Jack tried to read the real thought in Sid's mind. If there was any deception he could not detect it. Sid's manner was warm and friendly.

"It's in a big room at the farther end of this building," Sid explained. "Of course, you're not supposed to be invited to anything of the kind, as you're a new man here; but if you go as my friend, you see, it will be all right. And it will give you a good chance to get acquainted with some of the fellows."

Jack desired to stand well with Sid Percival. Perhaps it was chiefly on account of Sid's pretty sister. It cannot be denied that he had thought a good deal about Sid's sister that day.

It seemed only natural, too, that Sid, in gratitude for what Jack had done for his sister, would be desirous of showing him some favors. Sid's father was certainly a genial man; and it required no great stretch of the imagination to fancy that Sid was a genial youth, wishing only the good of this new acquaintance, who was still such a stranger in Seagirt.

"Do the rules of the school allow you to have a spread of that kind?" Jack inquired cautiously.

"There's never any kick, if we're quiet."

Jack still hesitated. Something warned him not to go. Yet he desired to go, and, more than all, desired to have Sid for a friend.

"The spread is going on now," Sid urged, "and we'll have to get a move on. I don't want to miss that feast, you bet! I'd really like to have you go; and introducing you round a little, you know, as my friend, will make it easier for you, you see, when you bump up against the fellows hereafter."

Whether Sid was the friend he professed to be or was acting treacherously, Jack resolved suddenly to go and see what was to be seen. In a physical sense he was not at all afraid of any fellow in Seagirt Academy. His was rather a moral cowardice, or timidity—a fear of being made the butt of some joke, or the victim of some horse-play.

Having resolved to go, he made a hurried change of clothing, and then followed Sid Percival from the room.

"You want to put out your light," said Sid; and he went back and put it out himself.

Sid now led the way along some silent corridors, that were already dark; and stopped at length before a door.

When he had rapped here mysteriously, a voice whispered something from behind the door. Sid answered in a low whisper.

When the door was opened, Jack looked into a room that was dark. The lights had been turned out. And not until he and Sid had passed into it, and the door has been closed and tightly locked behind them, were the lights turned on again.

Jack now saw before him a rather small room, which contained no table but a small one, evidently meant for a writing-desk; and a half-dozen or more fellows sitting about, some in chairs, one in a window

ledge, and a couple squatting on the floor on their heels, in lieu of chairs.

On that little table were some cigars, and all the fellows were smoking. In addition, on the table were candies of various kinds, a dozen bottles of beer and wine, a box of matches; together with cakes, cut loaves of bread, potted meats and fish, and evidences of a feast, either hastily interrupted or recently finished.

The fellows were the same who had treated him so strangely out by the gate in the morning, with one or two exceptions. One exception was that the youth who sat at the table, and apparently had been presiding over the bottles and the cigars, was one with whom Jack had had trouble once in Cranford.

This fellow was Ben Birkett.

Jack stopped in hesitation, and his face paled when he saw Birkett.

At once Jack knew that he was in a trap, and his anger burned hot against Sid Percival.

It seemed to him just then that nothing could have been meaner than this deception, by which he had been made to think that Sid wished to befriend him because of what he had done for Sid's sister. He recalled what Moses Mudd had said about Sid.

Jack involuntarily stepped backward toward the door. But the door was now locked, as he knew; for he had heard a key turn in the lock, and no key was now there.

All the fellows rose as if to greet him.

"Lightfoot," said Birkett brazenly, "we're celebrating your entrance into Seagirt Academy. We hope you appreciate the high honor. These are fellows you know, or will know when you get acquainted with them. So I'll not trouble to mention names. You can remember their faces."

Jack did not know what to say. He knew Glaze and Sid Percival by name, but not the others.

Birkett spared him the awkwardness of silence by going right on:

"Being rather short of cash ourselves, but knowing that a celebration was the thing in order, and that you've recently come into a fortune, we borrowed the money from you for this spread—for this beer and wine, and these cigars, and all the other delicacies that you see before you. We blew in the whole of that twelve dollars you were kind enough to give us. The only regret we have is that you refused to raise the contribution. If you had coughed up more, we could have swallowed more. See? That's a joke."

Jack's quick temper was giving him trouble again. He knew that he flushed red and then turned pale,

when he learned for a truth that he had been "worked" for that twelve dollars, and that it had been spent in this way.

Then he saw how foolish it was to make a row over that; and, further, that a "kick" would be worse than useless. These fellows would only laugh at him; and if he showed anger they would only laugh the louder.

So he said, controlling his temper and his voice:

"That was very cleverly done!"

"The health of Jack Lightfoot!" said Birkett; and he began to pour beer into some glasses.

The shock of seeing Ben Birkett there was passing away. Yet it excited Jack's curiosity. The last time he had encountered Birkett, the latter was going rapidly the downward road. He was moneyless, and apparently friendless, and was making a precarious living by his wits. Now he was here, looking much better, and evidently was one of the students, which implied that in some manner he had come into money.

Apparently Birkett read his thoughts.

"I've been telling the fellows all about you, Lightfoot," he said; "about how really wonderful you are, you know, and all that—that there isn't a fellow in Cranford, or that whole section, who can hold a candle to you in any way. I've told them that you're the pride, the joy, and the hero of the Cranford high school; the captain of all the teams—baseball, basketball, football, handball, and every other kind of ball; that you're the champion skater, hockey player, swimmer, runner, jumper, hammer-thrower, hurdle-leaper; in short, that when you take snuff the whole country up there throws one gigantic sneeze. Knowing you to be such a Wonder, they are impressed with the great honor which your coming here has conferred on Seagirt Academy. They know now that their names will be constantly in the newspapers, and that in a little while Walter Camp will be enrolling them as the All-Star teams of America in every line of sport. Therefore, they desire to show their appreciation of the really and truly remarkable young fellow who has come among them; before whom they bow in humbleness, realizing that they are but dust in the pathway of your progress. So, here's to your health; and we all ask you to drink it with us."

He pushed one of the large filled glasses toward Jack.

His manner was serious, and his tone had sounded respectful; yet Jack knew that Birkett was making sport of him, and the knowledge stung him.

"I never touch beer," he said, trying still to control his too hot temper.

There was a gasp of apparent astonishment.

"What?" cried one and all, as if they had rehearsed this.

Then they looked at each other in assumed astonishment, saying slowly:

"Ah-h! the Wonder never touches beer."

"You will permit us to drink your health?" said Birkett, in mockery.

"Drink anything you want to," Jack answered.

"Ah-h!" sounded the chorus. "The Wonder permits us to drink his health!"

The worst of it—if there could be a worst where all was so humiliating and irritating—was that Sid Percival was saying these things with the others.

They drank Jack's "health," stopping now and then to look at him over the foam of their glasses and to tell each other in loud whispers that he was a "Wonder!"

Jack stood with his back to the door, flushed and irritated.

"Well, here is some champagne," said Birkett, laying his hand on a bottle. "We haven't much of this ichor of the gods, because champagne costs money, and we had only twelve dollars; but, perhaps, you'll have some champagne with us?"

"I don't care for any," said Jack guardedly.

"Ah-h!" sounded the chorus! "He doesn't even drink champagne!"

They stared at him again over the foam of their beer glasses.

"Then you'll smoke at our expense?" urged Birkett, and he pushed forward some villainous cigars.

"No!"

Jack shook his head positively.

"Ah-h!" was rumbled once more. "He doesn't even smoke?"

Birkett stared at him as if in amazement, putting his glass down on the table.

"Lightfoot, in Heaven's name, haven't you any failings at all? Are you an angel?"

"I've plenty of them," said Jack, "as you ought to know."

"Ah-h! he hasn't any failings!" chorused the others. "He is a Wonder!"

"I don't think I remember them," said Birkett, "except that once, as I recollect it, you got so drunk you had to be taken home and couldn't lead your hockey team."

This seemed to create a sensation. One of the young fellows was, to all appearances, so astonished that he let his glass fall to the floor.

"Ah-h!" rumbled the chorus. "Once he got drunk, and couldn't lead his hockey team."

Birkett's statement was a wilful perversion of the truth, and was worse than a lie.

Jack's face flamed like fire. He laid his hand on the door-knob.

"If you'll let me out of here," he said, speaking to Sid Percival, "I shall be glad to go. You invited me to a friendly spread, and I find that I've been brought here simply to be made a butt of ridicule. I think I should prefer to go."

His voice trembled, his face was fiery hot, and his blue-gray eyes had contracted, while a frown was set on his handsome forehead.

"Ah-h! He wants to go—the Wonder wants to go!" came from all round.

The fellows all at once put their glasses back on the table, and lighted cigars of the villainous variety offered to Jack; and then they began to blow the smoke into his face at every opportunity, as they moved round, at the same time always begging his pardon in the most obsequious tone. The room filled with the foul tobacco smoke, and, as none of the windows were open, and the room was therefore as tight as a box, the effect was sickening.

"Fellows," said Jack, speaking now to them all, "I came here hoping to meet friends. I see I was mistaken. I should like to meet friends here, and to make friends; but, if I'm not to, I should be really obliged to you if you would open this door, and let me out."

"Ah-h! The Wonder wants to cut our company!" they cried; and they puffed more smoke into his face, and jostled against him.

One of them was especially offensive in this—a tall young fellow, with long, strong arms, muscular shoulders and body, a dark, heavy face, heavy, dark hair, and flashing, black eyes.

This was Kid Kennedy, as Jack was to know later, and he was the young fellow spoken of by Moses Mudd as being the leader of the wild set at the academy. Jack had not forgotten that Moses had said that Kennedy and his crowd would "skin" him.

Kennedy stumbled against Jack, was pushed against him, trod on his toes, and shoved his hand into Jack's face, all apparently by accident, but purposely, as Jack knew. Now and then, Kennedy came close up to him, and poured a volume of smoke into his face and eyes.

"How d'ye like it?" he demanded.

"Not at all," said Jack, who was rapidly losing his

temper under this "rough-house" treatment. "Let me out of here."

Kennedy became more insolent.

A moment later he swaggered up to Jack, poured forth another cloud of smoke, and, as if this were not enough, reached out his heavy hand, and slapped Jack in the face.

There were some things Jack Lightfoot would not stand. He felt that he had already stood more than common decency demanded he should. So, when that "spat" landed on his cheek, his fiery anger broke loose, and he struck back, with such force that Kid Kennedy was knocked headlong, and, catching his toe, fell to the floor with a thud that shook the room.

Ominous silence followed.

Every one seemed to be startled by what had occurred.

Jack backed against the door, which he could not open, and, with his face fiery red now, and his heart jumping, he waited to see what would happen.

Kid Kennedy rose slowly, apparently bewildered.

As slowly he came toward Jack, while the other fellows in the room seemed to hold their breath. His dark face had flushed, and his black eyes had become snaky. He doubled his big right fist, and pushed up the sleeve of his coat. To all appearances, he meant to leap on Jack right there.

"Lightfoot," he said, in a low and tense voice, "you'll fight me for that, or I'll hammer you into the wall!"

Jack returned his savage look with a calmness that was more than normal; and then, in a voice that quivered slightly, but was nevertheless cool, he answered, scorn in his words:

"Why, you big brute, I'll fight you right here, if you say so, with all your friends about you! I'm not afraid of you!"

There was no "Ah-h-ing!" now, but genuine surprise. Jack did not know that Kennedy was considered a fighter, though he might have guessed it from what little he had heard from Moses Mudd. But if he had known, it would have made no difference. He did not fear Kennedy, nor any of those others who had been making sport of him for the past half-hour; and, now that his temper was up, and growing hotter every instant, he would have fought any two of them, or even all of them, if they had jumped him, or crowded him.

Kennedy shook his big fist under Jack's nose.

"I'll do you—see?" he threatened. "They'll be

ready to take you away from here to-morrow in an ambulance!"

Jack pushed the big fist away with an angry gesture.

"Keep that out of my face!" he commanded.

"I'll smash your face with it!" said Kennedy.

He thrust it in again, touching Jack's nose as he made the movement.

Again Jack's hard, white fist shot out, with the speed of a mule kicking.

Crack! sounded the blow as it fell on Kennedy's cheek.

Kennedy tried to catch himself, but again he went backward, being caught this time by Sid Percival.

Kennedy now tore himself from Percival, and, drawing a knife, he sprang open the big blade, and would have rushed upon Jack with it, if some of his friends had not caught him.

"Let me get at him!" he panted wildly. "I'll cut his heart out for that!"

"No, no, not that!" said Sid, catching his knife-hand, and clinging to it. "No fighting with knives."

"I'm going to have satisfaction for that!" panted Kennedy.

"Yes, but don't holler, and bring some one down on us. We'll see that you have a chance to fight him for that."

Kennedy, in wild rage, threw himself to and fro, striving to get at Jack.

It did not increase Jack's opinion of him, nor of his fighting qualities. He had seen fellows rage and throw themselves about that way before, with their friends holding them, and had observed that, usually, they wanted their friends to hold them back.

Yet Jack did not make the mistake of supposing that Kid Kennedy would not fight; he only despised and loathed the fellow now, and, in his rage, was ready to meet him, and to hammer his face in.

"I'll fight you here, or anywhere!" said Jack, panting out the words. "You've got your friends about you, and I'm alone; but I'll fight you just the same!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE.

Jack still stood by the door, with his back against it. His face was pale now, and his gray-blue eyes big and bright. His hands were dropped at his sides, half clenched.

"Take the knife away from him," he said, speaking

to the fellows in the room, for Kid Kennedy still clutched the deadly blade. "I'm willing to fight him, then, if he will have it."

Sid Percival disarmed Kennedy, twisting the knife out of his hand. Having done that, he closed the blade, and dropped the knife into his own pocket.

Kennedy's face was red with rage and humiliation. He had not dreamed that Jack would strike him. In fact, he had thought the new student from Cranford would not dare to resent the bullying and annoyance to which he was subjected.

Now he came slowly forward, his lips curled with hate and his black eyes glittering. As he did so, he began to slip out of his coat.

"Lightfoot," he said bitterly and slowly, "no man strikes me and fails to pay for it! I hope you understand that, and that you're ready to take your medicine, and not play the cry-baby after I'm through with you."

He drew his arms out of his coat, and flung the garment to Sid Percival. Then, as slowly and deliberately, he removed his cuffs and his collar, and threw them to Sid.

"Shall I hold your coat for you?" said Julian Glaze, coming toward Jack. "That is, if you intend to stand up before him?"

Glaze's tone showed a doubt that Jack would dare to stand before Kennedy.

With his eyes fixed on Kennedy, Jack drew off his coat, and gave it to Glaze; and then gave to him his cuffs. His collar he did not remove.

"Thank you," he said quietly, and again turned to watch Kennedy.

The latter stood before him now with clenched fists and a look in his black eyes that was almost murderous.

"Are you coming away from the door?" Kennedy snarled.

"In the center of the room, if you like," was Jack's answer.

He moved along the wall, and retreated toward the middle of the room, keeping his face toward Kennedy, who followed him slowly, with a watchful, panther-like movement.

"Slug him now," said Birkett, speaking to Kennedy in a low tone. "He thinks he's a fighter, but——"

Kennedy, who had been watching for an opening, leaped in, thinking he had found it.

Jack knocked aside the blow aimed at his face, and retreated slightly, on the defensive.

"Aw, stand up, and take your medicine!" Kennedy growled, again looking for an opening.

"Slug him!" growled Birkett.

Kennedy feinted, and then struck like a flash; but, to his astonishment, his fist seemed to slip right by Jack's face, without landing, and, before he could recover, for he had thrown his whole strength into that blow, Jack's hard right fist caught him on the jaw, spinning him round, and almost knocking him down.

Kid Kennedy was not the only one astonished by this; the other fellows in the room, all partisans of Kennedy, were equally amazed.

Still, they would not give Jack Lightfoot credit for what had happened; they thought it was but an "accident."

His failure to land, and that stinging blow in the face, angered Kennedy more than anything else could have done.

He came at Jack again, as soon as he could recover, and with a wild leap, which showed that he was losing his caution.

Jack retreated before him, laughing now in his face.

Jack had long ago discovered that, if you can get your enemy enraged, and remain yourself cool, half the battle is won. A cool head is needed in fighting, as in everything else; yet a cool head is most difficult to maintain at such a time. Jack had control of his temper now; and Kid Kennedy was losing, or had lost, his.

Jack let Kennedy chase him about the room; and, while, to the fellows looking on, this seemed cowardice on his part, Jack was doing it to wear out the patience, as well as the strength, of his foe.

Seeing Jack retreating before him, and dodging and evading every time he struck, Kennedy demanded that he should stand up to the rack, and take his medicine.

"Stand up in front of me, you coward, while I knock you down!"

But Jack evaded, and then Kennedy rushed in again, desirous of delivering a knock-out blow that should settle the thing at once, and fully satisfy his burning desire for vengeance.

Once more his fist seemed to slide right by Jack's face without touching it, and once more, as the pull of his heavy blow drew him forward, Jack's iron knuckles caught him on the jaw and spun him round.

Then—crack! crack!

Two more blows landed on Kennedy's face before he could recover, and, but for Sid Percival, against whom he lurched, staggering, he would have fallen against the wall, or tumbled to the floor.

"Hammer him!" said Sid, who, in sudden fear, foresaw the defeat of his champion and the success of this new man, if things did not change quickly.

Kennedy rushed again, trying to "hammer" Jack. Crack!

Again Jack landed.

"Oh, this is a shame!" he said, dancing back out of the way when he had delivered that stinging blow. "Stand up to the rack, and take your medicine!"

He was but repeating Kennedy's own words to him; but the peculiar manner in which he said them was enough to drive Kennedy insane.

With a scream of rage, forgetful of the fact that he might be heard, Kennedy came at Jack once more like a charging mad bull.

Jack feinted, and retreated, then landed again; but the blow was a glancing one. It drew blood on Kennedy's cheek, but scarcely stopped him.

Kennedy was no child, however, and no amateur. Fighting now with blind fury, and disregarding the blows that landed like thumping drumsticks on his chest, he drove Jack into a corner.

"I'll kill you!" he raged; and then he struck again.

Smash!

Jack had writhed to one side like an eel, and that smashing blow fell against the hard wall, almost breaking the bones in Kennedy's hand.

Then Jack came again.

Crack!

It was Jack's fist sounding this time, and the fist had landed fairly.

Kennedy spun round, clutched at the air, reeled, and would have tumbled limply to the floor if Sid had not again caught him.

"Get up, and go for him again," Sid begged, when Kennedy lay limp in his arms. "Are you going to let the duffer knock you out this way? Hammer him! You can do it!"

The only response was a groan.

Jack stood by the wall, at the farther end of the room, still on the defensive. He was not at all sure but that some friend of Kennedy would seek to jump him now.

But these friends of Kid Kennedy were too dumfounded, for the moment, to think of that. And they had gained a sudden respect for this youthful stranger, whom they had set down as an easy mark, and thought to badger and harry.

Kennedy staggered heavily to his feet, in response to the urgings of Sid and the other fellows, who had rushed to his help; and stood there, with them supporting him, while he stared round.

Then he saw Jack, and seemed to recall where he was and what had happened.

His face, which had gone suddenly pale, flamed again.

"Let me get at him!" he said.

"Do him up!" urged Sid, in a trembling voice; and he pushed Kennedy toward Jack.

But when Kennedy, who had grit enough, tried to pull his reeling faculties together and dash across the room, his brain whirled suddenly, darkness came to him, and again he fell, this time striking the floor.

Jack saw that Kennedy was whipped, and was about to ask his coat and cuffs of Julian Glaze, who was the most bewildered fellow there, when an alarm was sounded.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCOVERY.

"Slide!" said Glaze, shooting back the lock, and diving through the door.

Jack had heard nothing outside. Now, when the light went out, plunging the room in darkness, it occurred to him that perhaps this was a scheme of his enemies to "hammer him up" in the darkness.

So he stopped groping for his coat, and backed against the wall, listening.

There was a mad scramble in the room, and racing feet were heard in the corridor.

The fellows were scudding from the room like rats from a sinking ship.

Jack groped again for his coat and cuffs, and found trouble in finding them, for they had been kicked over the floor in that stampede of the students.

He secured them at last, however, after the room was deserted by every one save himself; and, without putting them on, he stepped to the door.

At one end of the long corridor he heard pattering feet and sounds which seemed to indicate that the students were being there pursued.

Stepping out into the hall, he was following in the same direction, with a fear of detection by the academy authorities, when a blinding light of electricity was turned full into the hall.

Before him, and not a dozen feet away, was Professor Chubb, and near him was Chubb's thin, dried-up assistant, Lazenby, whom he had heard the boys call "Professor Dry-as-dust."

It was the latter who had turned on the light.

Jack stopped, as if blinded. Not another boy was in that corridor, and there he stood, with his coat over his arm and his cuffs in one hand, caught in the very act of beating what appeared to be an ignominious flight.

Chubb was apparently amazed when he beheld him. He stared at Jack, and then hooked his big glasses over his nose for a better scrutiny.

Chubb's voice was the first to break the silence.

"Mr. Lightfoot, I am astonished to see you here!"

"And I am astonished to see you here!" was Jack's grim thought, which he was wise enough, however, not to put into words.

"You have been fighting, sir," said Chubb severely; "fighting in that room where I see the door open!" Jack did not answer.

"Dry-as-dust" slipped past Jack, and, running to the door, thrust in his hand; this he followed with his slender body, and from within came the flash of a light. A cry of surprise from him followed this, and drew Professor Chubb toward that room.

"A pretty kettle of fish I'm in now," was Jack's thought, as he was thus left standing in the corridor. "Shall I run, or shall I stay, and brazen it out?"

The feeling that he would probably be sent home, in disgrace, fairly sickened him.

Then Jack did what he should not have done—he turned about, and sped along the hall, running lightly, in the direction of his room, leaving the two men in the room where the battle and the "feast" had taken place.

Jack felt that his face was scratched and bleeding, and he wanted to get out of sight, for a time, at least.

"Zounds!" Professor Phineas Chubb was sputtering, as he stared at the wreck and ruin in the room.

In their dash out of it, the students had overturned the table and some chairs, and red wine soaked the floor like blood, while the atmosphere was surcharged with the odor of beer and tobacco.

The lean professor, "Dry-as-dust," stumbled on a broken glass, and, pitching forward, banged his thin head against the wall. As he did so he gave a squeal of surprise, for the light went out in the corridor.

"Did you put that light out?" said Chubb, speaking angrily.

He was swollen with rage, and could not speak decently, even to his assistant.

"No, sir, I—"

"Then how did it—"

"I couldn't have put it out from here, sir!" Dry-as-dust protested.

"Very true!" snorted Chubb. "That boy did it. I—"

He darted into the corridor, intending to wreak

vengeance on Jack Lightfoot. As he did so he ran his round, fat stomach into the head, or the fist, of some one standing there; and, when he fell back against the wall with a groan, gasping that he had been killed, he heard the light pattering of feet, as the mischievous miscreant sped away.

"Lazenby, turn on the light!" he roared, clapping his thick hand to his fat stomach, and groaning again.

"Dry-as-dust" came sliding out of the wreck of the room, and, running to the electric bulb in the corridor, turned on the light.

What he saw was Professor Chubb leaning against the wall, groaning, with his hands pressed against his fat stomach. The hall contained no other person.

"It was that rascal, Lightfoot!" grunted Professor Chubb. "Help me, Lazenby; I think I am seriously injured. He struck me in the stomach as I ran out here. Assist me to my room, please."

"Yes, sir," said Lazenby, taking Chubb by the arm.

"Not that arm!" snapped Chubb; "I struck that arm as I fell against the wall, and I think it's broken. Take the other arm! Lazenby, forgive me if I seem harsh."

"Yes, sir," said Lazenby, trying to assist him.

"We'll have to send that young rascal home, Lazenby!"

"Yes, sir; I think so, sir."

"Out he goes in the morning, bag and baggage. Is your head hurting you, Lazenby?"

"Yes, sir. I struck it pretty hard against the wall, sir. But it is not crushed, sir."

"We shall have to send that rascal home in the morning."

"Yes, sir; but I'm wondering, sir, if he could have been alone in there, sir. Could he have eaten all those things by himself, sir, and drunk all that beer and wine, and—"

"We shall investigate this, Lazenby. He had help, of course. But this—this affront, on his arrival here, is—is—"

"Yes, sir."

"Is quite insupportable. Lazenby, I—I think I'm dying! Ow-ow! Oh, how my stomach hurts! You know I was threatened with appendicitis, Lazenby,

and this seems to have brought it on again. Get me to my room quick, Lazenby, and telephone for the doctor."

"Yes, sir," said the obedient Lazenby, as he tugged and strained to get the bulky form of his principal along the corridor.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTERWARD.

There could be no doubt that Professor Chubb was entirely well in the morning, except as to his temper. That might have been improved, greatly to his benefit, and presumably to the benefit of Jack Lightfoot, who was now summoned before him.

Jack went, as the saying is, "in fear and trembling." He did not know what had happened in the corridor after his flight from it, but he guessed that the situation could not have been worse for himself. He anticipated immediate expulsion, on the very threshold of his life at the academy, and it would have been a disgrace, to be felt keenly, to be sent home in that manner.

Yet Jack could not wholly blame himself. In fact, he blamed himself very little. He had not intended to violate any of the rules of the academy in accepting Sid Percival's invitation to attend that "spread," and surely he could not be blamed for what had followed. He knew that it would have been more manly if he had remained in the corridor after he was seen there by Chubb, but he had given way to a sudden feeling of panic, and had fled. For that indiscretion, he expected to suffer now, and he did not know how he was going to explain his presence there in the corridor. No explanation that would be acceptable seemed possible.

Lazenby was the one who delivered the summons to him to meet Chubb in the latter's office, and Lazenby's manner in delivering it had been of itself enough to give Jack a chill of apprehension. Not that Lazenby had said anything; he had merely looked his thought and his condemnation.

Jack found Professor Chubb seated in his easy chair, behind his big desk.

As Jack came into the room, and Chubb saw who he was, the big eye-glasses went up on the big nose, and through them Chubb stared hard.

Jack stood before the desk, his face flushed. There was a faint line of black under one eye, left there by Kid Kennedy's fist. Jack had not been able to hide that telltale bit of color.

The professor's eyes snapped through the big glasses.

"You were fighting in that room last night, Mr. Lightfoot?"

"I was," Jack admitted.

"Will you be kind enough to tell who you were fighting with?"

Jack knew that question would come.

"I should prefer to mention no names," he answered.

"You mean you will not?"

"I should prefer not to."

"Why?"

"It seems to me that it would not be exactly honorable?"

"So you refuse to tell?"

"I should prefer not to."

"There were others in the room with you?"

Jack hesitated. He had already admitted that he had been fighting; and, of course, as he saw, that of itself was an acknowledgment that one other, at least, had been in that room.

"If you please, sir, I should prefer not to say."

"But there were others?" pursued Chubb.

Jack did not answer.

Professor Chubb's fat face grew red.

"You turned out the light in the corridor, and, when I ran out of the room to see about it, you struck me in the stomach with your head or your fist. What have you to say to that, sir?"

This was, to Jack, a surprising statement.

"You are mistaken about that," he answered.

"Do you mean to deny it?"

"Yes, sir; I know nothing about that."

Chubb leaned forward, reading Jack's face; and Jack's face turned a dull beet color under that stern scrutiny.

"You did not strike me in the stomach there in the corridor, after the light went out?"

"No, sir."

"Then who did?" Chubb thundered.

"I don't know sir; I didn't know anything about that until you spoke just now."

"You were in that corridor?"

"I was, when you went into the room with Professor Lazenby, but I was not there when the light went out. When I left the corridor, the light was burning."

"This is the truth, sir?"

"It is," said Jack quietly, though his face still burned hotly.

"You did not see any one in the corridor?"

"No one but you and Professor Lazenby."

Chubb dropped back into his chair with a nervous lurch, took off his glasses, wiped them carefully, and, readjusting them, returned to the attack.

"How did you chance to be in that room where, as you say, a fight occurred?"

"I think I should prefer not to answer."

"Why not, please?"

"It might involve some one else."

"So you prefer to suffer alone—prefer to be punished alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"There was a feast in that room. Can you tell me anything about that? There was a feast, with beer and wine, champagne and cigars. I'd like to hear your story of that, sir."

Jack did not answer.

"You refuse to speak of that?"

"I prefer not to, sir."

Chubb took off his glasses again, polished them, and returned them to his nose. His manner changed.

"Mr. Lightfoot, I think I understand your feelings in this matter. There is a foolish notion abroad among the students which makes them believe that it is honorable to screen those of their number who are guilty of misdemeanors. I am sorry to see that you have imbibed this false notion of honor. And I am especially sorry that, right at the beginning of your work here, you should have done what I know you

did. I accept your word that you did not strike me in the corridor. I intend to investigate this matter, let the punishment fall where it may. And I may find it necessary to demand of you the names of the students who were in that room with you. You may go now, sir."

Jack stepped out of the room with a feeling of relief. Yet there was a threat of future action that he was not likely to forget.

Hardly had he reached his room when Julian Glaze appeared there. Glaze came in, and closed the door behind him, and, standing by the door, looked earnestly at Jack.

"Old Chubb has had you under the harrow?" he asked.

"He has," said Jack tartly.

"And you told him?"

"Nothing."

Glaze's anxious face brightened.

"Lightfoot, you're all right!" he cried. "The fellows declared that you'd blab the whole thing. What's he going to do? Kick you out of the academy?"

"I suppose that you fellows would permit him to do that, and would stand back, like cowards, and not say a word to prevent it?" said Jack angrily. "But what I'd like to know is, who struck Professor Chubb in the corridor, after turning out the light?"

Glaze grinned.

"Where was he struck?"

"In the stomach."

"I thought you said in the corridor. I should call that a punch in the bay window."

"This isn't any laughing matter. He charged it upon me."

"And you denied it?"

"I did, flatly. I knew nothing about it, and I told him so."

"You said you didn't tell him anything!"

"I told him that."

"Do you call that nothing? So you did blab, just as the fellows said you would."

He hesitated, and seemed about to retreat from the room.

"By the way, Lightfoot, there was a pair of skates

in that room last night, and this morning they're missing."

"Why don't you go to Professor Chubb, and ask him about them?"

"You didn't see them?"

"No."

"That's all."

Glaze went out.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE ICE.

That mention of skates made Jack think of the ice, and, taking his skates, he left the academy, for the hour was yet very early. After getting breakfast on the way, he proceeded to the nearest skating pond, which he had located the previous day.

It was like a tonic, to get out into the clear, cold air. As he walked along, he could not help thinking over the happenings which had come to him since his advent into Seagirt. It had been but a little while ago, and yet how many things had occurred.

Nor had these happenings pleased him, with a few exceptions.

There were a number of skaters on the ice when Jack reached the lake. Some of them were students at the academy, he felt sure; yet he was not acquainted with them.

Jack adjusted his skates to his feet, and was soon flashing over the ice. He was a swift, strong skater, graceful and lithe, and skating was always a joy to him. Hence, he almost forgot the things that had so annoyed him; though, of course, he could not put them entirely out of his mind.

He skated to the far end of the lake, and, circling the end, came flying back, gliding easily and gracefully.

As he neared the point from which he had started, he was surprised and pleased to see Kitty Percival. She had a pair of skates swung on her arm. She smiled a greeting when she noticed him. Apparently, she had entirely recovered from her unpleasant experience of the previous day.

"Oh, these aren't the same skates!" she cried, holding them up, when she saw Jack looking at them.

"No?" said Jack. "I hardly thought they were."

"Moses tried to find my other in that snow-bank, but couldn't. I knew he couldn't before he tried, but he said he'd get them, if he had to shovel all that snow away with a spoon."

She laughed merrily, with a pleasing flash of her blue eyes.

Jack begged permission to adjust her skates for her, and she complied willingly.

As he arose from his knees before her, he heard a grinding of skates near him, and saw Kid Kennedy.

Kid was scowling blackly, and Jack recalled the words of Moses Mudd, that Kid Kennedy was "stuck on" this girl.

It did not please Jack when Kitty Percival gave Kennedy a merry flash of her blue eyes, and seemed not averse to meeting him.

"Let me introduce you to Mr. Jack Lightfoot," she called to Kennedy. "Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Lightfoot."

Jack's face flushed, and Kid scowled.

"Oh, we've met!" said Kennedy, with an attempt at carelessness.

"What in the world is the matter with your face, Kid?" she asked now. "Did you fall, and hit yourself?"

There was a discolored spot on Kid's cheek and a cut under one eye. They did not add to his good looks. Jack Lightfoot's hard fists had set those marks there.

"Yes, I fell," Kid stammered; "I struck my toe, and stumbled, up in my room, in the dark, and done that when I fell."

He frowned insolently at Jack, and the latter knew that hate was black in his heart.

"Wouldn't you like to skate up toward the head of the lake?" said Jack boldly to the girl.

"Why, yes; that would be fun!"

She laughed coquettishly, as she answered, and flashed Kid another merry look out of her blue eyes.

Jack wondered, afterward, if she did this for the purpose of making Kid Kennedy jealous. Just then, the joy of taking the girl away from Kid Kennedy was the thought uppermost in Jack's mind.

Kid stood glowering, as Kitty Percival skated away with Jack, leaving him standing there on the ice, for he had not even yet put on his skates.

"He looks as if he wanted to bite some one," Jack remarked.

"Yes; I wonder what he's mad about this morning?" she said innocently. "He must have got an awful fall."

"He's feeling the effect of that, perhaps," Jack answered, "and has probably a bad headache."

"I should think he would have."

"So should I."

They were silent a moment. Whether she were a bit of a coquette or not, time alone could show; but she slipped now, as if one of her skates had struck something, and threw out one hand toward Jack. Jack was not slow to catch it; and then they skated on, with hands linked together. Jack wondered if Kid Kennedy was looking now, and hoped that he was.

"He's a friend of your brother, I think," said Jack.

"You mean Kid Kennedy?"

"Yes."

"They're chums."

"He's a pretty nice fellow, I suppose?"

"Oh, he's great fun, sometimes. He's lively, you know, and he talks so funny. Why, he keeps me laughing half the time with the funny things he says."

This was not pleasing to Jack. Evidently Kitty Percival thought a good deal of Kid Kennedy, a thing to be marveled at, it seemed to him. What in the world could she see in Kennedy to like? He found no answer to that question.

"Girls are queer," was his thought, falling back to that worn statement, which explains nothing.

"Can you do figure skating?" she asked, after awhile.

"Somewhat."

"Oh, I like that! I wonder if you could write my initials?"

Jack released her hand, and, with some fancy flourishes, wrote her initials with his skates; and

then, seized with a sudden impulse, he wrote his in with them, making a sort of linked monogram.

The girl's cheeks flushed, making her even prettier than before. And there was admiration in her eyes. Jack was a handsome fellow, and he made a handsome picture, graceful and lithe, as he swung round, writing those letters and making those wide flourishes. He was an excellent figure skater, and it pleased him to realize it now.

A bell tolled, off in the distance.

"Goodness!" she cried. "There's the first bell of our school, and I've got to be going. I didn't know it was so late."

"So you're going to school to-day?" he said, as they turned to skate back toward the other end of the lake. "I didn't know whether you'd be able to go to-day."

"Oh, I'm all right now."

She shivered, with the recollection of that awful leap from the trestle.

"I was so nervous that I could hardly sleep the early part of the night," she admitted; "but I thought I could go to school to-day."

"I am glad I was there to help you when you became frightened."

She looked at him—they were holding hands again, as they skated back.

"So am I."

It was always a difficult matter for Jack to talk with certain girls. With others, he could chatter like a blackbird. Kitty Percival was one of the girls with whom talking was difficult, especially when she looked at him with those flashing blue eyes.

"I hope you went through your examinations all right," she said.

"Yes, I didn't have much trouble."

"I've heard they're difficult. Sid says they're awful."

Jack had not found them very difficult.

"I hope you and Sid will be good friends."

"I'm sure I should like to have him for my friend," was as much as Jack could say to this.

When they reached the end of the ice Jack removed her skates for her, and watched her as she hastened away.

"A mighty pretty girl," was his thought, as he watched her.

CHAPTER XI.

THREE AGAINST ONE.

While Jack stood looking at the trim figure of Kitty Percival, as she tripped on her way, the express-train which had brought him to Seagirt rolled across the high trestle, some distance off, with a loud roar.

Seeing it and hearing it brought back with much vividness the feelings which had possessed him when, in peril of his life there, he had rescued Kitty Percival, and he had a quickening of his heart-beats and an unpleasant trembling of the nerves.

Yet that very peril had given him a chance to show the metal that was in him, and had brought him the acquaintance and friendship of this girl. It had, also, brought him the good-will of the Percival family, with possibly the exception of Sidney.

Even yet Jack could not understand how a boy who was Kitty Percival's brother, having full knowledge of the fact that Jack had risked his life for his sister, and thereby had saved her probably from a horrible death, could have so conducted himself toward that other. To Jack this was an enigma. He only knew that, if he were in Sid Percival's place, he could not have thought of acting as Sid had acted.

As the express-train rolled on into Seagirt, with its whistle screaming, Jack knelt on the ice and slowly removed his skates.

Then he stood looking about at the skaters and at the ice, and off at the buildings.

It was a singular and an unpleasant feeling to stand there, not knowing a soul in sight. It was altogether so different from anything he had experienced in Cranford, where he knew every one, and every one knew him. And the homesick feeling which had come to him more than once broke loose again.

"Oh, Cranford is the place!" he said to himself, as he was about to leave the ice.

He had not seen Kid Kennedy, and Kennedy was one person for whom he had been looking.

He was pretty sure now that Kennedy's hatred of him would not be lessened by what had happened that morning. And he knew also, by this time, that his own motive in skating away with Kitty Percival was not merely a delight in her company, but to inflame the hate and jealousy of Kid Kennedy.

Jack knew that now, and he was not sorry he had acted in that way. He had enjoyed the pleasure of the girl's company, and he hoped that Kid Kennedy was so jealous that he was green. He even resolved that he would seek the girl out, and pay her special attentions, just to irritate Kennedy.

These were not worthy motives, you say?

All I can answer is that Jack was human.

Kid Kennedy had treated him in a way to inflame his anger, and if he could strike him in this way, he could do it. Yes, Jack was very human.

Though he had not seen Kennedy, nor Sid Percival, he was thinking of them, and of Kitty Percival, as, with skates on his arm, he left the ice, and walked toward the road that ran, not far away, in the direction of the academy grounds.

Several of the boys and girls were leaving the ice. Bells had been ringing in various quarters, and these were calls to school.

Jack looked at his watch, and walked slowly; for he had discovered he had time enough and to spare.

He was still thinking of Kid Kennedy and Sid Percival, and of Sid's pretty sister, when, as if his thought had conjured him out of the ground, he beheld Kennedy before him, close by the wall that ran along here.

There were two other fellows with Kennedy, and, at sight of them, Jack's face flushed again, and he anticipated trouble.

One of the two with Kennedy was Ben Birkett. The other was a fellow Jack had had trouble with once at Cardiff, at the close of a ball game, the previous summer.

Jack had been very much surprised to find that Birkett was at Seagirt Academy, and he wondered now if this Cardiff youth was also a student there.

He hoped not, for Birkett himself was enough to almost turn him against the school.

Birkett and the two others had stopped, and seemed to be awaiting his approach; but Jack did not deviate from the line of his walk, even though he felt sure that trouble was ahead of him, and they were three to his one.

"See here, Lightfoot!" said Kennedy, when Jack was close up to him.

Jack stopped.

"Did I hear you speak to me?" he asked.

"You did. And there's a little settlement coming between us."

Jack laughed harshly.

"I thought that little settlement was made last night," was his light answer.

He was about to pass on, for he had no wish to get into a fight with them there, and their manner was particularly belligerent. But Ben Birkett interposed before him, and Jack stopped.

He did not intend to run; and, to be sure that he would not be attacked from behind, he backed toward the stone wall.

Apparently, Kennedy, Birkett, and their companion had come from the ice, for all three carried skates; yet Jack had not seen Birkett there.

Now, as they closed in on him, he observed Birkett looking curiously at the skates he carried.

"There is your thief!" shouted Birkett, pointing at Jack and at the skates on his arm. "Do him up, fellows; this is your chance!"

Jack recalled what had been said at the academy by Glaze about a pair of skates being missing, and that they had disappeared from the room in which the fight had been pulled off the previous night.

Seeing the look in Birkett's face, and being sure from it that this was but an excuse for an attack on him, he came to the instant conclusion that no skates had been lost, but that the statement had been made merely to build up against him some charge of thievery or dishonesty, for the purpose of more thoroughly discrediting him.

The discovery did not tend to make Jack have a higher opinion of the young fellows he had been up against almost since the moment of his appearance at Seagirt.

"Do him up!" Birkett repeated.

And, with that, all three leaped at Jack.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE RIGHT TIME.

Jack dropped the skates from his arm, and met Kid Kennedy's rush with a straight punch, which struck Kid's nose and set the blood to flowing. It also stopped his rush.

The others had followed Kennedy, and, when he was tumbled backward so suddenly, they hesitated.

Jack was smiling now, but it was a wicked sort of smile, which made his white teeth gleam. His gray-blue eyes held a dangerous light.

Kennedy clapped a hand to his nose, which felt as if it were crushed, and, finding blood on his fingers as he drew them away, he pulled out his handkerchief. It gave him time for breath. He had tried to ward off that blow. Having failed, he had grown cautious.

"Knock his block off!" said Birkett.

Yet he didn't seem anxious to do it himself, but stood awaiting the movement of Kennedy.

"Try it!" cried Jack, that smile still on his face.

"I'll kill you for this!" Kennedy howled suddenly.

Then he leaped at Jack, blinded by rage and by the pain of the blow he had received.

Jack ducked, and delivered a punch that caught Kennedy in the stomach, at the same time saving himself from the blow of Kennedy's fist.

Birkett had darted in to seize Jack by the legs and throw him, but, as he did so, the toe of Jack's shoe came up and struck him violently in the face.

The third young fellow tried to land a blow on Jack's cheek, and failed.

Jack did not seek to follow up his advantage, but set his back against the wall, and waited another onset.

"If you think I'll allow you fellows to jump me without hitting back, you're mightily mistaken!" he panted.

"Smash him!" roared Birkett.

He was in a wild rage now, as well as Kennedy, and

the third member of the party was as ready as either of the others to down Jack.

Kennedy was noted at Seagirt as a rushing fighter, but this morning he was perhaps not in his usual good form, because of the hammering Jack had given him so short a time before; and, besides, he had learned to respect Jack's prowess, and that respect made him cautious.

"Down him!" said Birkett again. "Down him, and beat the life out of him!"

There could be no doubt of Birkett's desire to make good his words.

Jack laughed in his face.

"Why don't you come on yourself?" he cried.

"I will!" screamed Birkett, and he threw himself at Jack, with Kennedy and the other fellow jumping in with him.

Jack did not have so easy a time of it now. Kennedy landed a jolting blow, and Birkett got Jack by the legs, while the third young fellow flung himself on Jack's shoulders like a bulldog.

Jack smashed his fist into Kennedy's face, but it did not cause Kennedy to release his hold; and the boy from Cardiff circled Jack's neck with one strong arm.

Jack hurled Kennedy backward with a blow that struck true enough, and delivered so violent a kick in Birkett's stomach that Birkett released his legs; but the boy who had hold of Jack's neck jerked him backward, causing him to fall against the fence.

Then all three were on him, each trying to smash him in the face, and trying, as well, to pin him to the ground.

Jack clutched Kennedy by the throat with one hand, and, with the other, began to hammer the boy from Cardiff.

But Ben Birkett had Jack by the legs again, and was trying to drag him down. As Jack struggled to rise, he felt his legs fairly pulled from under him, and swayed to and fro, fighting these wiry antagonists.

At this juncture he heard a yell, and heard some one come running along the road.

Then the voice of Lafe Lampton rang out, thrilling him to the core of his being, and filling him with such a renewal of fighting spirit that it seemed he

would be a match himself for all three of the fellows who were trying to down him.

"Give it to 'em!" squalled Lafe, as he swung his thick body along the road, and came jumping to Jack's help. "That's right; I'm with you!"

Lafe had landed from the express at the lower station, just as Jack had done on his arrival, and then had walked along the road toward the academy buildings, which some one had pointed out to him.

His coming could not have been at a more propitious time.

He had seen, as he approached, that it was Jack whom the three young fellows had attacked, and he had sprinted to help him.

"Smash 'em!" he yelled.

And then he was there, and, with a tiger jump that no one unacquainted with him would have expected him to make, he was on the back of Kid Kennedy.

He pulled Kennedy away from Jack; and, when Kennedy turned on him, Lafe smashed him in the face with his terrible right.

Kennedy struck back, and then he and Lafe had it, in a regular set-to.

Thus relieved of Kennedy, who was the fiercest fighter of the three, Jack proceeded to relieve himself of the arm that was hooked round his neck, by catching the Cardiff boy by the throat and choking him.

In doing it, the combatants went to the ground together, with the Cardiff boy beneath and Ben Birkett on Jack's back.

Birkett began to hammer Jack's head, but Jack threw him. Before Birkett could get up, Jack had him also by the throat.

Such an exhibition of strength Jack had seldom given as now, when he fairly drew the heads of the fellows together beneath him, and, setting a knee on Birkett's chest, with a leg thrown over the body of the fellow from Cardiff, he held them both by the throat and choked them.

"Let up," said Birkett, beginning to wheeze.

The Cardiff boy writhed, and tried to get away from those ironlike fingers.

Lafe Lampton and Kid Kennedy were down in

the snow. Now they arose together, striking and struggling, and then there was a smashing blow delivered.

Jack did not know who delivered it, until he saw Kennedy fall like a toppling tree, and saw Lafe jump on him as he went down.

"Enough!" gurgled Birkett to Jack, wheezing the words.

Kennedy did not say anything, for that terrible blow, right between the eyes, and the fall, had knocked him senseless and breathless for the moment.

Seeing that Kennedy was knocked out, Lafe was about to go to Jack's assistance.

"Let up!" gurgled the boy from Cardiff. "I've got enough, I tell you; let me up!"

Jack flung the two from him, and rose to his feet.

"I'd give 'em a little more," said Lafe, doubling his fists. "Did they jump you?"

"Yes, as I was on my way from the lake."

"I thought it. And one of the skunks is Birkett. Just like Birkett. He'd ought to be in the penitentiary, instead of here. What's he doing here?"

He did not address Birkett, who was crawling to his feet.

The Cardiff boy got up out of the snow. Both he and Birkett looked sullen and whipped.

"This ain't the end of it!" snarled Birkett, finding difficulty in speaking.

"Ain't it?" shouted Lafe, moving toward him. "Then I think I'll give you a little more, just for the fun of the thing."

Birkett backed away.

"I'm not talking to you!" he said.

"But remember that I'm talking to you!"

"Come along," said the Cardiff fellow to Birkett.

Kennedy had recovered consciousness, and the rage and humiliation that filled him now passes words to describe.

With Birkett's aid, he rose slowly to his feet.

"Lightfoot," he said, trembling violently, "this don't settle it!"

"Well, you're a sight!" was Lafe's exclamation. "I don't know you, and don't want to know you; but I know Ben Birkett, and I know that the three of you

are low-down puppies and cowards to jump on one fellow. I'd advise you to go somewhere, and make the acquaintance of some soap and water. You'll look handsomer."

The look that Kennedy gave Lafe would have killed, if looks could kill.

"I'll remember you!" he threatened.

"Good!"

"And I'll settle with you another time!"

"That's good, too!"

Then the three thoroughly whipped young fellows moved slowly away; and it did not make them feel better to know that some of the skaters from the pond had hurried up and were witnesses of their humiliation.

"This must be a lively place," said Lafe humorously, as he watched them go.

"Lively?" cried Jack, trying to smile, though he did not feel like it. "Well, I should say! This is the second fight I've been forced into since coming here, and already I'm threatened with expulsion from the school. And I've been accused of stealing these skates!"

Lafe stared at the skates, which Jack picked up out of the snow.

"Jiminy crickets! They're yours! You had those skates in Cranford. How could you steal 'em?"

"I couldn't; but I'll tell you all about it, and about the other things that have happened since I came here."

Then he put his arm round Lafe's neck, and they walked together in the direction of Seagirt Academy.

THE END.

Next week's issue will be No. 53, "Jack Lightfoot's Hazing; or, Tricking the Tricksters." In the number you have just read you have seen how Jack entered Seagirt Academy, and some of the friends he made in Seagirt, as well as some of the enemies. That these enemies were determined to make things lively for him may easily be understood. How they tried to haze him will be found in next week's story, together with some other things that you will find interesting, and well worth reading.

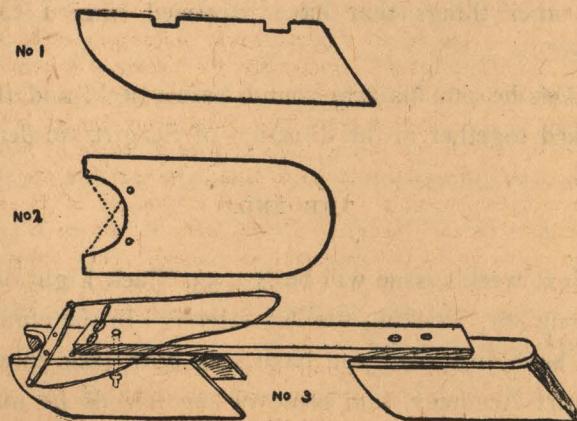
HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line." No. 40, "The Men Behind." No. 41, "Signal Systems." No. 42, "Team Play." No. 43, "The End of the Season." No. 44, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (I.) No. 45, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (II.) No. 46, "Bag-Punching." No. 47, "Camping." No. 48, "Cruising in Small Boats." No. 49, "Snow-Shoe and Skee Work." No. 50, "How to Make and Use a Toboggan." No. 51, "Tip-Ups for Pickerel Fishing Through the Ice."

WINTER SPORTS.

With the advent of winter and its accompanying snow and ice, our thoughts turn to sport on the hillside, and on the frozen lakes and rivers. A strong, healthy boy does not like to stay in the house in the winter any more than he does in summer, when nature puts on her best dress and calls him outdoors. There is just as much to attract us during the fall and winter, when the woods are bare and the air is chilly, though the attractions are of a different kind. The same hills and fields, where we played "hares-and-hounds" and camped out in spring and summer, we now visit on snow-shoes, and perhaps with a gun slung across our shoulders, if we are inclined to be sportsmen. The pond where we caught catfish and perch last August looks as if it were a different pond brought from some fairy-land, where they have trees covered with diamonds instead of leaves, and the liquid depths that reflected the gorgeous colors on a beautiful day look like the frosting of a huge cake. Every one wears heavy shoes and has on a thick coat, for there is a brisk breeze blowing. The boys are going to fish for pickerel through the ice, or put on their skates and play "snap the whip," instead of loitering on the bank, dangling a fish-hook and willow pole in the expectation of catching the unwary perch.

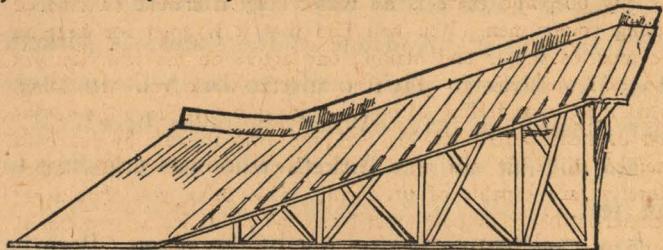


In winter we take our outdoor pleasures a little more strenuously than we do at any other time of the year. It seems a great deal like real work, at times, but we are only following out the latter part of the old saying: "Work when you work, and when you play, play hard." Although there is no mossy bank along a gurgling stream to lie upon and rest in the balmy summer breezes after a tramp through the woods and fields, we can always look forward to a cheerful fire at home, where loving friends

are waiting to welcome us when we bid adieu to the pleasures of King Frost for the day. The apples, walnuts, and cider are brought up from the cellar, and the household joins in the games we all welcome to pass away the long winter evening till bedtime arrives.

But it is the outdoor sports and games that we are going to consider in this paper. What concerns us now are the joyous possibilities of sleighing, bob-sledding, snow-shoeing, skeeing, tobogganing, curling, ice hockey, sliding, and skating. Then there are other winter amusements, such as fishing through the ice, skating with sails, snow-balling, ice-boating, riding in chair-sleighs, making snow-images, and a score of other things which can be indulged in at this season. But there is not enough space to treat of all these subjects in one issue. It will be necessary for us to limit ourselves to a few this time, trusting that our readers will be indulgent enough to allow us to re-serve the majority of the various subjects for some possible future number. A few topics like snow-shoeing, skees, tobogganing, and fishing through the ice have already been described at length in previous issues.

There are very few boys who have not ridden down-hill on a bob-sled at some time or other in their lives. And how the boy who is the fortunate possessor of one is the envy of his companions not so lucky as to own a bob-sled. You can make one without much trouble, if you are fairly handy with tools.



A TOBOGGAN SLIDE.

Take two planks five feet long and one foot wide; measure six inches from one end to a point through which a line will run diagonally to the upper side of the board opposite the point from which you made the first measurement. The runner then will look like a picket fence, but cut only on one side. Saw the other end of the boards so that the sharpened point will come on the lower side. The illustration shows how the runners will appear when you have sawed the planks, rounded one end of the runner with a planing-knife, and made notches in the top for holding the crosspieces fastened to the body of the sled.

For a top-board use a plank one inch thick, and saw the ends so that it will look like the second figure when finished. The easiest way to get the curve is to make a triangle as indicated by the dotted lines. Then what little wood is left you can cut away with a draw-knife such as wheelwrights use. The braces which are to go into the notches should be one and one-half feet long, one inch thick, and two and one-half inches wide. Use screws to fasten your sled together; they are more satisfactory than nails. Of course your sled must have strips of iron on the runners to prevent it from sticking in the snow. Go to the village blacksmith to get this part of the work done, as he can do it in a very short time and at a small cost. If you try to put them on yourself you probably will find that you lack, not only the proper material, but the skill which comes natural only to the practised hand.

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp-fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

Do you think pole-vaulting is a good thing for a young man to practise? Please answer, and oblige an admirer of ALL-SPORTS and a friend of Jack Lightfoot. Three cheers for Maurice Stevens and the publishers of your famous library.

Springbrook, Cal.

JOHN CLARKE.

What makes you think that pole-vaulting is *not* good for a young man? We infer that this is what you have in mind from a question of this nature. Pole-vaulting is excellent exercise for any one, and there is no reason why it should be tabooed among young men. You will find that it is good for keeping the muscles supple and making one active on his feet. It will also add variation to whatever athletic work you are doing. What a pleasant feeling of power it gives one to have the sensation of being lifted off his feet and into the air by his own unaided skill! It has an exhilarating effect which few other exercises are capable of producing. One thing you should remember is that your pole must be of the right size, if you expect to do the best work. Many people make the mistake of using a pole that is either too long or too short for them. A tall boy with a small pole and a short boy with a big pole are combinations that, besides making a ludicrous picture, prevent the jumpers from arriving at any degree of proficiency. The poles should average from six to ten feet in length.

I have just finished reading No. 42, and I see in the Chat column that a writer wants the Cranford boys to enter a preparatory school. I think that would be a good plan. My favorites are Jack, Lafe, Bob Brewster, Brodie Strawn, Jubal Marlin, and Saul Messenger. That was a dirty trick of Ned Skeen's to go back on Jack. If Jack does enter some school, I hope Bob Brewster will go along. I am glad to hear about Wilson Crane having trouble with the "gang." I would like to have been at Lafe Lampton's Thanksgiving dinner. Well, I will close before this gets into the waste-paper basket.

1532 Eagle Street, Terre Haute, Ind. RAYMOND WALKER.

Your letter shows that you are a close reader of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY and are familiar with all the characters. We are glad to see that it affords you so much pleasure. There are so many things of interest in ALL-SPORTS that it is no wonder you like it so well.

In regard to your ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, I would like to express my opinion of this weekly.

I like Jack all right, and Tom. Phil is all right, but he is too jealous. Lafe and the rest are all to the good also.

Why does not Mr. Stevens let a boy have a good story of Rugby, in which the Cranford team lose? I read every one of ALL-SPORTS from 1 to 42, and think they are all right.

I am also in partnership with another boy, who thinks the same as I do. I belong to an athletic club. We play all athletic games. I think a good basket-ball game would be a fine story.

Give my best regards to Mr. Stevens from me once. My dear old partner, I remain, yours truly,
JOHN.
Weehawken, N. J.

You never can tell what will happen these days. Jack's team is liable to lose any time. So far he has won because they didn't catch him napping.

I would like to ask you a few questions. 1. How are my measurements? Age, 12 years 11 months; height, 5 feet 2 inches; weight, 88½ pounds; neck, 12½ inches; biceps, right, 8½ inches; left, 8½ inches; biceps, contracted, right, 10 inches; left, 9¾ inches; forearm, right, 9½ inches; left, 9½ inches; wrist, right, 6½ inches; left, 6½ inches; chest, normal, 28 inches; expanded, 31 inches; calves, right, 12¼ inches; left, 12¼ inches; ankle, right, 8½ inches; left, 8½ inches; waist, 24 inches; thighs, right, 17¼ inches; left, 17¼ inches. My records are: Running broad jump, 12 feet 3 inches; standing broad jump, 7 feet 7 inches; running high jump, 3 feet 10 inches; standing high jump, 3 feet 3 inches. 2. How are my records? 3. What are my strong points? 4. What are my weak ones? Yours truly,

JACK LIGHTFOOT, JR.

Bedford City, Va.

The records are excellent for a person so young, but we expect that when you get a little larger that you will lower them considerably. Try to increase by eating properly and keeping regular hours. Use dumb-bells, night and morning, to enlarge your biceps and give you a larger chest.

ALL-SPORTS is all right; so are the characters. Seeing the pictures of the three libraries published by the Winner Library on the back of a *Tip Top*, I thought I would ask if Street & Smith owned the Winner Library Company. The answer will settle a dispute, so be sure and answer. Of the boys, I like Jack, Tom, Lafe, Ned, Phil and the rest all about the same.

Well, I will close, with three cheers for Maurice Stevens and the Winner Library Company,

A. BOOSTER.

Tacoma, Wash.

Here is a letter from the rival city of Seattle, far away in the State of Washington, where, it is said, it rains *thirteen* months in the year! Tacoma lies in an arm of the great Puget Sound, and is known as a great wheat shipping port to the Orient. Its water-front is remarkable for having a warehouse wharf which is the longest of any in the world. The highest mountain in the State is about fifty miles away, but it seems to be near enough for you to walk to it in a couple of hours. If any of our friends should go to Seattle he will find that the people call the mountain "Rainier"; but in the city of Tacoma it is called "Mount Tacoma." If you want to stir up trouble in Tacoma refer to the mountain as Rainier. They know at once that you have probably visited Seattle first and been told by the wicked Seattleites that there is no such thing as Mount Tacoma!

The Winner Library Company is a separate corporation that has for its purpose the printing and publishing of the ALL-SPORTS and libraries of a similar nature.

Having been reading your weekly magazine from the beginning, I have obtained a greater knowledge of athletics than from any other paper. I would rather be at some football game or in the woods than at some entertainment. I have been playing on a football team all fall. We have only lost two games out of eight. After all my training I have obtained these measurements: Age, 16 years; 5 feet 1 inch in height; 105 pounds in weight; and my neck is 13 inches; chest, 31 inches; normal; expanded, 33 inches; biceps, 12 inches; waist, 26½ inches; thighs, 18½ inches; calves, 12½ inches. These were taken

when stripped. Please tell me if my measurements are up to the standard. I wish success to the editor.

Elizabeth, N. J.

A LOVER OF SPORTS.

Your weight is just about right, and you have no cause to complain about your measurements. May you never lose your love for outdoor sports and the inviting fields and woods that nature makes so enticing, even in winter when she is far from being at her best.

I am a great admirer of ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. Even the cat brightens up when he sees a new copy of ALL-SPORTS in my hands. If all the five-cent books were as good as ALL-SPORTS they would be very good indeed. I think No. 32 of ALL-SPORTS was good—"Jack Lightfoot, Archer; or, The Strange Secret of an Arrow Revealed." I would like to see Jack, Tom, and Lafe go to Africa or up in the Arctic. I have read every one of the ALL-SPORTS that has come out. I think if they were to be stopped I would feel as if I had lost my best friend. This is my weight: 80 pounds; age, 12 years; 5 feet 4 inches. Please tell me in your next issue how tall I should be, and how much I should weigh. Well, three cheers for Mr. Stevens and the Winner Publishing Company,

CLAYTON C. COOPER.

4 Park Avenue, Troy, N. Y.

You are such an ALL-SPORTS enthusiast that we expect to hear, after awhile, that you have taught that cat of yours to read the weekly herself. What is it, a trained cat you own? You are tall enough, but you ought to weigh twenty or thirty pounds more than you do. But do not worry. In a few years you will probably be as fat as any of us.

Being a constant reader of your fine weekly, ALL-SPORTS, I take the liberty to ask a few questions. Age, 14 years 3 months; height, 4 feet 11 inches; chest, 30 inches; expanded, 32½ inches; waist, 27 inches; across shoulders, 15½ inches; around hips, 32 inches; arms, 26 inches; right ankle, 9½ inches; left, 9¾ inches; right calf, 13 inches; left, 13¼ inches; neck, 12½ inches. I weigh 102 pounds. How are my measurements? What are my weak points? I can run one-fourth of a mile in one minute fifteen seconds. How is that? I like Jack best, and think Nellie is the girl for Jack. I wish you had more about Jack and his friends shooting, as I like guns and hunting very much. Hoping to see this in print in the Chat column, I will remain a reader as long as possible,

JAMES GLASS.

Chicago, Ill.

You are very well proportioned for a young man of your age. The record you send is good. We expect to hear soon that you have lowered it a few seconds.

(*"How to do Things"*)—Continued from page 28.

For your bob-sled you need two of these sleds, the back one being an exact duplicate of the front one. They are connected by a reach-board. This is what the passengers sit upon, and must be made of a substantial piece of wood. It can be of any size, but eight feet is a good length. Select a board that is about sixteen inches wide and an inch thick. See that it is free from knots, and plane it until the surface is very smooth. The reach-board does not set directly on the top-board of the sleds, but upon crosspieces called the "reach-blocks." These should be made of oak, about fourteen inches long by four inches wide and one inch thick. Fasten one on the top-board of both the front sled and the back sled. Bore a hole through the middle of the first one and right through the sled itself. This hole is for the "king-pin." The reach-board is, of course, fastened firmly to the back sled, but it is necessary to have the forward sled so that it can work on a pivot, otherwise the contrivance could not be steered. The king-pin is a long iron bolt, having a head at one end and threads at the other to hold a nut in place. Put a block of wood three by four inches, and an inch thick on the under side of the top-board, so that the

king-bolt will pass through it. The nut rests against this instead of the board, and it acts as a kind of washer.

For steering purposes it is safer to have a wooden crosspiece for the person sitting in front to rest his feet on than a shaft and wheel protruding a couple of feet above the reach-board. This foot-rest should extend ten inches from each side of the reach-board. In addition to this fasten a brace securely to the top-board within an inch or two of the front. Its ends should not project more than five inches from the sides of the sled. A strong rope attached to them and held in the hands of the steersman, who, unlike the man guiding a toboggan, sits in front, is all that it necessary in the way of steering-apparatus. Take your "bob" to the nearest hill where the snow is so compact that it is almost as hard as ice, let four or five chums get on, have the last boy shove off, and enjoy the delights of this entrancing sport.

When the first fall of snow comes, the city boys have great fun sliding on the even pavements. Five or six get in line, and follow the leader, who takes a short, quick run and slides over the snow with legs spread apart, and one foot in front acting as a guide or path-finder, as it were. The other boys come right behind him, and the snow soon takes on a glassy, icy appearance from the friction of so many feet. And the slide gets so slippery that it is safer to run than to try to walk over it, as dignified old gentlemen sometimes find out when the small bad boy precociously develops into a humorist and carefully hides the trap with clean white snow.

There is hardly a reader who has not indulged in snowballing, the making of snow images, and the building of forts at some time or other. The snow has to be somewhat damp, so that it will stick, otherwise these pleasures must be deferred till another day.

In some parts of the country the ground is so flat that there is practically no chance for riding down-hill on a sled. But you can make a miniature toboggan-slide with a few boards which will give you a taste of real sledding. Go to the lumber pile and pick out all the large boards you can find. They do not have to be new. Make a frame ten or twelve feet high, seven feet wide. Build a platform at the top wide enough for you to stand on with a sled. Cover the inclined plane of the slide with half-inch boards. Be sure that they fit close together, making a smooth, even surface. The uprights which hold the structure should be reenforced by crosspieces to give it stability, and side boards nailed along the entire length to keep the flying sled from leaving the track.

When the weather grows very cold and it looks as if it were going to freeze, pour water on the slide that night. In the morning it will be coated with smooth, hard ice, and ready for you to enjoy some good sport. For stairs to enable you to get to the top of the slide with the sled, nail wooden cleats on one side. Of course if you are carpenter enough to be able to make a pair of wooden stairs, so much the better; but the other kind will answer just as well.

There is such a variety of winter sports that no one need feel any lack of amusement these cold, gray days. The thing which generally confronts most of us is our inability to choose from so many subjects. Most of us like them all, and we regret that it is impossible to play them all at once!

In next week's issue there will be a talk with you on fancy skating. You will find a number of hints about this art which are not generally known.

STIRRING SEA TALES

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2—Paul Jones at Bay; or, Striking a Blow for Liberty.	12—Adrift with Paul Jones; or, The Last of the Lagoon Pirates.
3—Paul Jones' Pledge; or, The Tiger of the Atlantic.	13—Paul Jones Against Odds; or, The Story of a Wonderful Fight.
4—Paul Jones' Bold Swoop; or, Cutting Out a British Supply Ship.	14—Paul Jones' Sealed Orders; or, Special Duty in the Caribbees.
5—Paul Jones' Strategy; or, Outwitting the Fleets of Old England.	15—Paul Jones Among the Redcoats; or, The Fight off Tobago.
6—Paul Jones' Long Chase; or, The Last Shot in the Locker.	16—Paul Jones and the Letter of Marque; or, Clipping the Tiger's Claws.
7—Out with Paul Jones; or, Giving Them a Bad Fright Along the English Coast.	17—Paul Jones' Running Fight; or, A Blow for Freedom at Old Nassau.
8—Paul Jones Afloat and Ashore; or, Stirring Adventures in London Town.	18—Paul Jones' Secret Foe; or, Traitors Aboard the <i>Providence</i> .
9—Paul Jones' Swamp Trail; or, Outwitting the Coast Raiders.	19—The Cruise of the <i>Eagle</i> ; or, Rescued by Paul Jones.
10—Paul Jones' Defiance; or, How the Virginia Planter Invaded 'Robbers' Roost.'	20—Paul Jones Among the Slaves; or, The <i>Portland's</i> White Captive.

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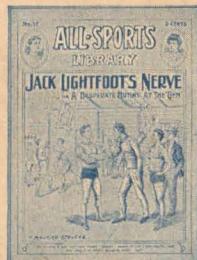
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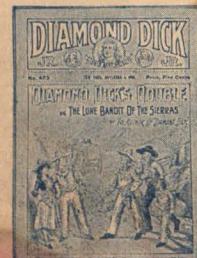
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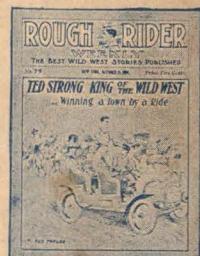
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